



# **THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL AWARD COMMITTEE MANUAL**

August 2015

## FOREWORD

There are few things more amazing than watching a child learning to read. Books for beginning readers play a key role in this process, and the best ones ensure that these early reading experiences are both enjoyable and positive. The Theodor Seuss Geisel Award was established in 2004, to recognize those books for beginning readers which meet a particularly high standard of excellence

First presented in 2006, the Award is funded by an endowment established through funding by the San Diego Foundation's Dr. Seuss Fund, and administered by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC). The award is given annually to the most distinguished American book for beginning readers. According to Gretchen Wronka, ALSC President 2004-2005 "There is a true magic to Geisel's work, which is clear in the enduring power of such classics as *The Cat in the Hat* and *Green Eggs and Ham*. This new award honors that spirit and the authors and illustrators that delight and engage children in reading."

Shortly after the announcement of the first award, the President of ALSC appointed a Task Force to develop this award manual. The first two Chairs of the Geisel Award Selection Committee comprised the task force, and their experiences on the Geisel committee inform the content of this manual. In addition, special thanks go to the members of the first two Geisel Award committees who tested and interpreted the award criteria in their careful deliberations, and offered many helpful suggestions during the writing of the Manual. Dudley Carlson, Priority Group VI Consultant, generously offered her wise counsel throughout the development of the Manual. The Task Force used the Sibert Award Manual as a model, and we thankfully acknowledge the excellent content and organization of that material which made our job much easier.

And to future members of the Geisel Committee, we hope that this Manual will offer you wise guidance during a rewarding year of Geisel Award deliberation.

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June, 2007

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## NOTES:

This manual attempts to outline the practices, procedures and principles to follow in the selection and presentation of the Theodor Seuss Geisel 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. The first step in seeking further guidance is for the committee chair to contact the committee's Priority Group Consultant.

Throughout this manual, the "Theodor Seuss Geisel Award" is called the "Geisel Award." References to "the President," "Vice President," "Board," "Executive Director," and "Executive Committee" imply ALSC affiliation. The American Library Association "Public Awareness Office" is referred to as PAO. The "ALA Youth Media Awards ALA YMA Press Conference" is referred to as the ALA YMA ALA YMA Press Conference.

The Appendix, "Expanded Definitions & Examples," was added in 2009 in response to increased committee queries to ALSC leadership regarding eligibility of books, authors, and illustrators. An Award Eligibility Task Force was convened in 2007 for the purpose of examining these questions, and the ALSC Board voted to accept the Task Force's report at Annual Conference in 2008.

# **PART I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

HISTORY

COMMITTEE FUNCTION STATEMENT

THE COMMITTEE

PURPOSE, TERMS, DEFINITIONS, AND CRITERIA

PRIORITY GROUP CONSULTANT

ALSC POLICIES

- ALSC Policy for Service on Award Committees

  - Conflict of Interest

  - Confidentiality

  - Guidelines for Award Committees

  - Meeting Attendance and Access to Materials

  - Frequency of Service on Caldecott, Newbery, and Sibert  
Committees

  - Checklist for Prospective ALSC Award Committee Members

- Relationship to Publishers

- Self-Published/Small Books Press

- Electronic Communication

## HISTORY

The Theodor Seuss Geisel Award is given annually to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished contribution to the body of American book for beginning readers published in English in the United States during the preceding year. The winner(s) receives a bronze medal, and Honor Book authors and illustrators receive certificates, which are presented at the ALA Annual Conference. The award, established in 2004 and first presented in 2006, is named in honor of Theodor Seuss Geisel, the world-renowned author and illustrator, who was a pioneer in the development of books for beginning readers. The award was funded by The San Diego Foundation's Dr. Seuss Fund, and is administered by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association.

## COMMITTEE FUNCTION STATEMENT

To select from the books published the preceding year within the terms, definitions, and criteria governing the awards, the most distinguished American book for beginning readers.

Established: 2004

Members: Chair + 6 members

Term: 2 years, with the 1st Midwinter and 2nd Annual optional

## THE COMMITTEE

The Geisel Committee consists of six members and one Chair. The six members and chair are appointed by the President. The appointment is for two years. The term of service begins at the conclusion of Annual Conference in the year before consideration and concludes at the end of the Annual Conference that follows the selection meeting.

## PURPOSE, TERMS, DEFINITIONS, AND CRITERIA

**Purpose:** The Theodor Seuss Geisel Award recognizes the author and illustrator of a book for beginning readers who, through their literary and artistic achievements, demonstrate creativity and imagination to engage children in reading.

**Terms:** The Award is to be given annually to the author and illustrator of the most distinguished contribution to the body of American children's literature that encourages and supports the beginning reader published in English in the United States during the preceding year.

### **Terms include:**

- There are no limitations as to the character of the book considered except that it will be original and function successfully as a book for beginning readers.
- The committee shall consider all forms of writing—fiction, non-fiction, and poetry.
- Honor Books may be named. These shall be books whose text and illustrations are also truly distinguished.

- The Award is restricted to an author and illustrator who are citizens or residents of the United States.
- The award is restricted to original work first published in the United States.
- The committee in its deliberations is to consider only the books eligible for the award, as specified in the terms.
- The author and illustrator may include co-authors and co-illustrators.
- The award may be given posthumously.
- If a suitable candidate is not found for any given year, the award will not be presented that year.

### **Definitions:**

Distinguished is defined as:

- Marked by distinction: noted for significant achievement;
- Marked by excellence in quality;
- Marked by conspicuous excellence or eminence;
- Individually distinct;
- Providing a stimulating and successful reading experience for the beginning reader containing the kind of plot, sensibility, and rhythm that can carry a child along from start to finish.

Contribution to the body of children’s literature that encourages and supports the beginning reader indicates the text of a book, which must be directed at readers from pre-K through Grade 2. The book must also contain illustrations, which function as keys or clues to the text. Picture books are to be considered if they function successfully as a book for beginning readers.

Original work means that books reprinted or compiled from other sources are not eligible

Creativity means originality, inventiveness, freshness, newness

First published in the United States means that books originally published in other countries are not eligible. Books published in a U.S. territory or U.S. commonwealth are eligible.

In English means that the committee considers only books published in English. This requirement DOES NOT limit the use of words or phrases in another language where appropriate in context.

Published in the preceding year means that the book has a publication date in the year under consideration, was available for purchase in that year, and has a copyright date no later than that year. An eligible book may have a copyright date prior to the year under consideration if it was not published until the year under consideration. The intent: that every eligible book be considered, but that no book be considered in more than one year.

Resident is defined as someone who maintains a home in the United States, a U.S. territory, or U.S. Commonwealth rather than someone who just visits.

The phrase only the books eligible for the award specifies that the committee is to consider only eligible books, not an author’s body of work or previous accolades.

**Criteria:**

In identifying the most distinguished children's book for beginning readers, committee members will consider the following important elements and qualities:

- The subject matter must be intriguing enough to motivate the child to read;
- The book may or may not include short "chapters";
- New words are added slowly enough to make learning them a positive experience;
- Words are repeated in an easily recognizable pattern to ensure knowledge retention;
- Sentences are simple and straightforward;
- There is a minimum of 24 pages. Books are not longer than 96 pages;
- The illustrations demonstrate the story being told;
- The design of the book includes attention to size of typeface, an uncluttered background that sets off the text, appropriate line length, and placement of illustrations;
- The plot advances from one page to the next, and together with the illustrations, creates a "page-turning" dynamic.
- The book creates a successful reading experience, from start to finish;
- The book is respectful and of interest to children
- The book shows excellent, engaging and distinctive use of both language and illustration

Not every book relies equally on every element. The committee need not find excellence in every element listed above. The book should; however, have distinguished qualities in all of the elements pertinent to it.

The book must be a self-contained entity, not dependent on other media for enjoyment.

The Geisel Award is presented to honor distinguished books for beginning readers. The award is not presented for didactic intent or for popularity.

#### 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 books.

**Work with Chair**

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.

**Work with Committee Members**

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

From the ALA Handbook of Organization, April 2007 and ALSC Bylaws, 1998.

## ALSC POLICIES

### **ALSC POLICY FOR SERVICE ON AWARD COMMITTEES**

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 reserve the right to speak on their own behalf outside of that closed session.

Committee members are urged to obtain a variety of critical opinions about eligible titles throughout the year. However, it is important to remember that in any verbal 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 titles are under consideration. It is understood that all eligible titles are being considered up until the selection of the winner is made.

#### **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 the book award committees should adhere to the following guidelines:

- 1) Members who have written or illustrated a book that may be eligible for consideration during the period of service on the award committee should not accept an appointment or nomination to an award committee.
- 2) Members may not be employed by a children's trade book publisher, author, or illustrator. Members who have served as an advisor or consultant to an author or illustrator of a children's book, or as an advisor to a children's trade book publisher, beyond the scope of assigned library duties, such as providing reference service, should not accept appointment or nomination if that book may be eligible for consideration during the period of eligibility as defined by the terms of the award. This includes writing teachers guides or readers' group guides at the request of a children's trade book publisher whether or not these materials may be eligible.
- 3) 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 the author or illustrator of any book that may be eligible which could reasonably be seen by an independent observer to cause a conflict of interest.
- 4) Members should not accept appointment or nomination to an award committee if they have a close family relationship (parent, spouse/partner, son/daughter) with a person employed by a U.S. trade publisher.
- 5) Members should not accept appointment or nomination to an award committee if they, or a close family member, directly own(s) equity (stock ownership, stock options, convertible note(s), or other ownership interest) that represents more than a 5% stake in a U.S. trade publisher.
- 6) Members should not engage in any print or electronic communication outside of the committee regarding eligible titles during their term of service, although they may verbally express their personal opinions regarding eligible titles at any time. This includes, but is not limited to, professional and general journals/magazines/newspapers, electronic discussion lists, blogs, and social networking services (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.). Members who write signed reviews in a professional or personal capacity must avoid publishing reviews of eligible materials during their term of service. Following the term of service, members are welcome to express their personal opinions about any eligible titles in any manner or forum, however at no time may they ever use titles or other recognizable details to identify the status of a title as having been or not been under consideration, suggested, and/or nominated for the award, nor may they ever reveal any elements of committee discussion.
- 7) Members may not serve concurrently on the ALSC Board and an ALSC award selection or media evaluation committee.
- 8) 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**

Persons elected or appointed to an award committee should:

- 1) 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) Have ready access to the major part of the current output of children's books under consideration in outlets such as your local library or bookstore and through interlibrary loan. It is recognized that there will be an occasional book under consideration which a committee member is unable to obtain. In such an instance, arrangements for review copies may be made as prescribed in the committee's guidelines.

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

### **FREQUENCY OF SERVICE ON AWARD OR NOTABLE CHILDREN'S BOOKS COMMITTEES**

*No individual may serve on the Batchelder Award, Caldecott Award, Geisel Award, Newbery Award, Sibert Award, Wilder Award, or Notable Children's Books Committees more often than once every four years. The four-year period shall begin from the last year of the term of service regardless of length of term. This guideline will not apply to the appointment for Chair. This guideline will not apply to other ALSC committees.*

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

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

Please fill out and return the attached checklist.

*February 2007. Policy revised May 2009, June 2011, January 2014.*

**Checklist for Prospective ALSC Award Committee Members**

Please respond to the following questions. A “yes” answer does not necessarily preclude service on an award 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 under contract for a children’s trade book that will be published during the period of your award committee service?** \_\_ Yes \_\_ No

**Have you been employed or served as an advisor or a consultant for a children’s trade book publisher, author or illustrator in the past three years?** \_\_ Yes \_\_ No

**Do you have a close relative (i.e. parent, spouse/partner, son/daughter) who is the author or illustrator of a book that may be eligible during the year of your committee service?** \_\_ Yes \_\_ No

**Do you have a close relative (i.e. parent, spouse/partner, son/daughter) who is currently employed by a U.S. trade publisher?** \_\_ Yes \_\_ No

**Do you, or does a close relative, directly own equity (stock, stock options, convertible notes or any other ownership interest) that represents more than a 5% stake in a U.S. trade publishing company?** \_\_ Yes \_\_ No

**Do you have a personal relationship with the author or illustrator of any book that may be eligible which could reasonably be seen by an independent observer to cause a conflict of interest?** \_\_ Yes \_\_ No

**Do you anticipate having difficulty attending all required meetings in person at Annual and Midwinter conference?** \_\_ Yes \_\_ No

**Do you anticipate having difficulty accessing newly published children's books?** \_\_ Yes \_\_ No

**Have you served as a member of the Batchelder Award, Caldecott Award, Geisel Award, Newbery Award, Sibert Award, Wilder Award, or Notable Children’s Books Committee in the past four years?** \_\_ Yes \_\_ No

*If you answered “yes” to any of the questions above, 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 may lead to immediate dismissal from the committee.*

I verify that I have read and understand #6 under Guidelines for Award Committees. I understand that effective the start of my term (July 1 or immediately upon appointment after that date), I will not write a signed review of eligible titles or post on social media accounts. I understand that once the committee’s selections have been announced at the midwinter meeting of my award year, I may then write or post about any book titles on electronic or print platforms.

**Please indicate here the service(s) and your user name or other identifying information accounts:**

**If you review in print and/or online, please provide the name of the review outlet and whether or not the reviews are signed or unsigned:**

\_\_\_\_\_  Signed  Unsigned      \_\_\_\_\_  Signed  Unsigned  
\_\_\_\_\_  Signed  Unsigned      \_\_\_\_\_  Signed  Unsigned

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

date

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

Checklist updated: February 2007, revised May 2009, June 2011, January 2014. May 2015.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH PUBLISHERS

### Guidelines for Committee Members

Members of the committee adhere to guidelines regarding their relationship to publishers. Important points:

- The ALSC Awards Coordinator makes the committee roster available to publishers as soon as possible in the year under consideration.
- Many publishers send committee members eligible books for consideration. Committee members may accept these unsolicited books.
- The Chair surveys committee members regularly to ascertain which books have not been received. It's quite common for book shipments to arrive weeks apart.
- If certain titles have been difficult to obtain, the Chair may contact publishers directly to inform them of books the committee would like to see, especially towards the end of the year when time is so important. The Chair may also ask the PGC to try and request books on behalf of the committee.
- Committee members are not to solicit publishers for free, personal copies of eligible books. Members accept appointment to this committee with the understanding that they have access to new books and may borrow any books they are unable to obtain from the ALSC office. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each committee member to obtain such books for reading.
- Committee members are cautioned to avoid any conflicts of interest that might grow out of personal contact with personnel involved in publishing children's books. It is not necessary to suspend these contacts so long as there is the express understanding that such contacts in no way influence how books are considered or the final choices made.
- Committee members are not to solicit publishers for favors, invitations, or the like. However, should there be such unsolicited offers, committee members may accept with the express understanding that acceptance in no way influences how books are considered or final choices made.

### Guidelines for Publishers

Publishers are encouraged to support the work of the Geisel Committee. Submission procedures are outlined for publishers on the ALSC website.

To submit works for consideration for one of the ALSC media awards:

- Review the terms and criteria for the award.
- Send one copy of the work to the ALSC Office (50 East Huron, Chicago, IL 60611-2795). Please indicate for which award the submission is intended.
- Submit one copy of the work to the award committee Chair. You have the option of sending a copy of the work to each committee member, but it is not required.
- A list of selection committee members for each award is available through a link on each award's Terms and Criteria page.

Deadline for submitting works is **December 31** of the publication year for all book awards and notables.

## SELF-PUBLISHED /SMALL PRESS BOOKS

Books self-published or published by small presses are eligible, provided they meet all other eligibility requirements. Books are eligible in their first year of publication only. If a self-published book is

republished later by another publisher, then the book will not be reconsidered upon its commercial publication. The chair of the Geisel Committee will keep and pass on a current –year list of Geisel-eligible books received directly from authors or from small, independent presses (Adopted by ALSC Board of Directors, June 2004).

#### ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

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. The Committee adheres to the “Guidelines for Electronic Communication for ALSC Committees,” as adapted by the ALSC Board in 2000, revised January 2012.

As a practical matter, e-mail is not used for substantive discussion. It is not a substitute for face-to-face book discussion. During the year, committee members may wish to discuss matters of concern having to do with eligibility or factual errors in a book. Questions on such matters are directed to the Chair who decides whether or not to bring a particular question to the full committee.

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.

## **PART II: COMMITTEE WORK**

WELCOME  
CALENDAR  
ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS  
ACCESS TO MATERIALS  
COMMUNICATION PREPARATION AND READING LIST  
IDENTIFYING, OBTAINING, AND READING ELIGIBLE BOOKS  
ELIGIBILITY  
NOTE-TAKING  
SUGGESTION PROCESS  
NOMINATION PROCESS  
PARTICIPATION OF ALSC MEMBERSHIP  
COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE MEETING (PRIOR TO MIDWINTER SELECTION  
MEETING)  
MIDWINTER DISCUSSION LIST  
MIDWINTER SELECTION MEETING  
MIDWINTER: AFTER SELECTION  
AFTER MIDWINTER SELECTION MEETING  
AWARD PRESENTATION

## WELCOME

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 year's work and up-coming issues. It is usually accompanied by relevant enclosures (e.g., the year's calendar, the roster, guidelines for book discussion, etc).

## CALENDAR

It is the responsibility of the Chair to establish and distribute a calendar of the year's 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. Refer to Part IV, *Calendar: Sample*.

## ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

The Geisel Committee members are responsible for attending all required meetings at the Annual Conference and at the Midwinter Selection Meeting. Other events are optional.

Because attendance at the Annual and Midwinter Conferences of the year under consideration is required of the chair and all committee members, members are urged to make certain at the outset that they CAN attend. This means: 1) securing permission from one's supervisor and, if necessary, one's director or library board to attend all required meetings; 2) securing funding for all required meetings (whether from personal funds or funds provided by one's employer); 3) making hotel reservations at the earliest date these are available (bearing in mind that many hotels are filled on the first day of registration; 4) making timely arrangements for transportation to the conference site; 5) Registering for the conference; 6) communicating with the committee chair if there is any emergency or last minute delay (such as inclement weather) that would affect the committee's operation.

A resignation to the ALSC President must be tendered in the event a committee member is unable to attend a required meeting. The President shall then appoint a new committee member to fill the vacancy. The President may look to a member of the Notable Children's Books Committee to stand in as a replacement if timing of the replacement draws close to the Midwinter Selection Meeting. This person would also continue serving on the Notable Children's Book Committee. This is the reason the two committees' meetings do not overlap. If a suitable replacement cannot be found in time for the Midwinter Selection Meeting, the committee will operate one member down and will have to reformulate the voting process to vote one member down.

Midwinter of the year under consideration. Refer to paragraph below.	Member attendance optional. Open meeting. Chair to attend attend Division Leadership meeting.
Annual Conference of year under consideration. (prior to Midwinter Selection Meeting). Refer to Part II, "Annual Conference Meeting (Prior to Midwinter Selection Meeting)."	Attendance required. Closed meeting.
Midwinter Selection Meeting of next year. Refer to Part II, "Midwinter Selection Meeting."	Attendance required. Closed meeting.
Annual Conference of next year (after Midwinter Selection	Attendance optional for the

Meeting). Presentation of award at ALSC membership meeting. Refer to Part II, "Award Presentation."	committee, required for chair.
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The committee is encouraged to meet at Midwinter of the year under consideration for an informal first meeting. The committee's year of service officially begins, but it is not a required meeting. At this meeting, the Chair may distribute the year's calendar if available. No official business takes place. Books under consideration are not discussed, nor are any procedural issues decided.

#### ACCESS TO MATERIALS

The Geisel Committee members are responsible for obtaining copies of books under consideration for the award. Publishers send many books; other books are obtained in a variety of other ways. Refer to suggestions in Part II, "*Identifying, Obtaining, and Reading Eligible Books*."

#### COMMUNICATION

Electronic communication facilitates the distribution of information from the Chair to committee members and the regular discussion of procedural issues.

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 and limited access websites are not used for substantive discussion. It is not a substitute for face-to-face book discussion. During the year, committee members may wish to discuss matters of concern having to do with eligibility or factual errors in a book. Questions on such matters are directed to the Chair who decides whether or not to bring a particular question to the full committee.

The Committee adheres to the "Guidelines for Electronic Communication for ALSC Committees," as adopted by the ALSC Board and as posted on the ALSC website.

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. Limited access websites or discussion lists available only to members of the committee may also be used.

#### PREPARATION

In preparing to select the most distinguished book for beginning readers, committee members need to be able to apply traditional literary and artistic standards to evaluate the books. But since these books must also meet specialized criteria unique to books for beginning readers, it will be helpful for committee members to understand what happens when a child begins to read. This knowledge can then be applied to the evaluation of books for these readers. Additionally, learning to read is a process that begins in the pre-school years, and continues often with adult support until the child is reading independently.

Take an active role and become immersed in the world of beginning readers:

- Participate in discussions of books eligible for the award. Book selection meetings, workshops, classes, and professional associations provide opportunities for such discussion.
- Read books appropriate for beginning readers from previous years and look toward defining and refining a critical viewpoint.
- Write critical analyses of beginning reader books based on the award terms, criteria, and definitions.
- “Adopt” a kindergarten or first grade class and observe how children learn to read.
- Conduct a mock Geisel Award; this has been done successfully with second graders who are reading well enough to read most books under consideration and to apply the criteria.

In addition to reviewing the terms, criteria, and definitions governing the award, the following bibliography offers books and articles that further define and analyze what makes a book successful for beginning readers. For an overview begin with a standard textbook such as *Children’s Literature in the Elementary School*. Essential to the understanding of how books for beginning readers function successfully is the chapter on the topic in *From Cover to Cover* by KT Horning. And for a look at the role neurophysiology plays in the reading process see Margaret Jensen’s article, “Start at the Very Beginning”.

## **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.

## SUGGESTED READING LIST

Chatton, Barbara. "On Beyond *The Cat in the Hat*: Theodor Seuss Geisel Award-Winning Books for Beginning Readers." *Journal of Children's Literature*, Spring 2007. v33. p. 1-5.

A member of the 2007 committee offers an overview of the Award, and an analysis of the winners and honor books from its first two years.

Cooper, Ilene. "Top 10 Easy Readers." *Booklist*, July 1, 2004. p.1851.

Elias, Tana. *Start at the Very Beginning: A Conversation with Margaret Jensen about Books for Beginning Readers*. Part of a series titled "Meet the Experts." *Friends of the CCBC Newsletter*, 1999, n.1. Retrieved January 5, 2007, from <http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/authors/experts/jensen.asp>

An experienced teacher of new young readers interprets neurophysiology in lay terms and discusses elements of books for beginning readers such as format and sight vocabulary.

Horning, Kathleen. *From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books*. HarperCollins, 1997.

The chapter on "Easy Readers and Transitional Books" gives a succinct history of these books, and a comprehensive analysis of the genre.

Barbara Kiefer. *Charlotte Huck's Children's Literature*. 9th Edition. McGraw-Hill, 2007.

In this standard textbook, the chapter, "Books for the Beginning Reader," gives an overview of the subject with a chart and examples of good qualities of books for beginning readers.

Kiefer, Barbara. "Understanding Reading." *School Library Journal*. February, 2001. p. 49-51.

"An expert explains how to help kids learn to read... and learn to love it."

Kruse, Ginny Moore. "Read Alouds? Think Again: The True Purpose of the Geisel Children's Book Award." *School Library Journal*. June, 2007. p. 36-37.

The Chair of the 2007 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award Committee explains the importance of letting young readers tackle the award winners on their own.

Lodge, Sally. "I Can Read Books Turns 40: This Trusted Line Of Beginning Readers Expands With New Age Levels." *Publishers Weekly* October 27, 1997. p. 33.

Marcus, Leonard S., ed. *Dear Genius: The Letters of Ursula Nordstrom*. New York: HarperCollins, 1998.

Includes correspondence on the publication of the Little Bear books.

Maughan, Shannon. "Readers for Early Readers." *Publishers Weekly*. May 22, 2000. p. 40.

Menand, Louis. "Cat People: What Dr. Seuss Really Taught Us." *The New Yorker*. December 23, 2002. p. 148.

Roback, Diane, Jennifer M. Brown, and Joy Bean. "*In Search of New Readers.*" Publishers Weekly. May 31, 2004. p. 30.

Smith, Robin. "*Too Easy? Too Hard? Finding the Right Easy Reader.*" Booklist July 1, 2003. p. 1902.

Ward, Caroline. "Best of Beginning Readers: The Theodor Seuss Geisel Award Launched by ALSC." Children and Libraries, Summer/Fall, 2005. p. 39.

## IDENTIFYING, OBTAINING, AND READING ELIGIBLE BOOKS

Committee members are responsible for **identifying, obtaining, and reading** eligible books throughout the year under consideration. It is wise to begin as soon as possible. The pace of publication increases throughout the year. It is important to keep up with these three responsibilities at all times.

### Identifying Eligible Books

Committee members are responsible for identifying eligible books to read and consider. Ways to identify eligible books:

- Examine publishers' catalogs.
- Read review journals.
- Check Spring and Fall publishing announcements (e.g., the announcements in *Publishers Weekly*).
- Check ALSC Notable Children's Books discussion lists as available. Contact an ALSC Notable Children's Books Committee member and/or visit the Notable Children's Books section on the ALSC website.
- Attend ALSC Children's Notable Books Committee discussions at Annual (prior to the Midwinter Selection Meeting) as schedule permits.

### Obtaining Eligible Books

Committee members are responsible for obtaining eligible books to read and consider. Many publishers do send books to committee members for consideration, although committee members often do not begin to receive books until April or May. Other ways to obtain eligible books:

- Pick up galleys at the Midwinter and Annual meetings and at any other conferences.
- Examine review copies received in the work place.
- Browse new titles at bookstores.

Committee members are not to solicit publishers for free, personal copies of eligible books. (See Part I, "*ALSC Policies: Relationship to Publishers*")

### Reading Eligible Books

Committee members are responsible for reading eligible books—those to consider as potential contenders, those suggested in the suggestion process, and those nominated in the nomination process. The reading load is heavy, and often re-reading is required.

## ELIGIBILITY

Committee members should refer to the current terms, criteria, and definitions, including the Appendix: EXPANDED DEFINITIONS & EXAMPLES, rather than to precedent or past winners in attempting to determine eligibility. It is important for committee members to make the initial effort to determine the eligibility of both the publisher and author/illustrator of the work—the year of publication, the citizenship and/or residency of the author/illustrator (U.S. citizenship and/or residency is required), and the locale of the publisher (the publisher must be located in the U.S.). In addition to the book itself, possible sources may include: 1) publisher's catalogs; 2) publisher's Web sites and those of authors and illustrators; 3) Library of Congress Web site; 4) Amazon.com and Amazon.UK. In ambiguous cases, committee members notify the Chair who consults with the Priority Group Consultant on eligibility questions. The Chair and the Priority Group Consultant decide eligibility questions, and the Chair informs the committee of their decisions.

## 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 Geisel 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. Refer to Part IV, "*Note-taking Form: Sample.*"

It is recommended that notes be taken on each book that is read. Notes about books 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 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 books under consideration. Although reviews are not to be quoted during discussion, they may raise questions and clarify opinion.

## SUGGESTION PROCESS

The Chair solicits suggestions of eligible books from committee members, usually on a monthly basis. Each time, committee members are asked to suggest books 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 books merit consideration by the group. Then too, the suggestion process helps committee members begin to weigh relative strengths and weaknesses of books based on the award criteria.

Committee members often recommend a book previously suggested. This practice allows the committee to develop an early gauge of support for books—a gauge that becomes useful in identifying books to consider in the nomination process.

Suggestion deadlines are listed on the calendar established at the beginning of the year. Suggestions are 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.

After each suggestion deadline, the Chair compiles a list of suggested books, indicates the number of suggestions for each book, and distributes the list to committee members. After the second round of suggestions, the Chair distributes a cumulative suggestion list along with a monthly list. (These two kinds of lists may be combined). Suggestions remain anonymous.

The Chair works as quickly as possible to get the suggestion lists distributed to committee members. Turnaround time is a week or less. At the same time, suggestion lists are also forwarded to the ALSC Awards Coordinator.

Serious consideration is to be given to all suggested books including those with minimal support. Sometimes only one committee member has seen a particular book. Sometimes support grows after re-readings or in comparison to other books under consideration.

As the suggestion list grows, it becomes easier for the committee to make comparisons among suggested books and to begin weighing relative strengths and weaknesses with regard to the award criteria.

It is possible to make further suggestions once the nomination process is complete. Such suggestions appear on the Midwinter discussion list. These further suggestions allow committee members to move forward books published late in the year, and in rare instances, a strong book previously overlooked.

Committee members are urged to suggest all strong books 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 book with regard to the award criteria and suggest only those books 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 books than others. In the suggestion process, it is important for committee

members to move forward only those books deemed strong enough to merit careful consideration by the whole committee.

The suggestion process focuses attention on particular books. It does not limit the committee's reading. Committee members are expected to identify, obtain, read, and consider other eligible books as a matter of routine. Committee members are expected to suggest strong books as a matter of routine.

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

## NOMINATION PROCESS

Twice during the year the Chair calls for nominations. Each time, committee members are required to nominate three books deemed to be the strongest contenders based on the award criteria. They are also required to provide a written justification statement for each book nominated.

The nomination process serves several important functions. It requires committee members to identify the strongest contenders. It also measures support for books. The written justifications serve as preparation for oral discussion at the Midwinter Selection Meeting by providing practice in how to succinctly state points that speak to the award criteria. (Justification statements are usually no more than 100 words.)

Nominations are submitted according to an established nomination ballot form. The Chair either provides a template of the form by e-mail or asks committee members to re-create the form for themselves. Refer to Part IV, "*Nomination Ballot (#1): Sample*" and "*Nomination Ballot (#2): Sample.*" In submitting their ballots, committee members do not rank their nominations in order of preference. This practice helps discourage early judgments, and it underscores the importance of Midwinter discussion. Nominated books form the core for the Midwinter book discussion list.

In the second round of nominations, committee members sometimes nominate books previously nominated by others on the committee. This practice allows the committee to measure support for books.

Nomination deadlines are listed on the calendar established at the beginning of the year. Nominations and justification statements are submitted to the Chair by e-mail to meet designated deadlines. Nominations and justification statements sent by U.S. mail or FAX must be **received** by those designated deadlines.

For each set of nominations, the Chair compiles a list of the nominated books, indicates the number of nominations for each book, and distributes the list to committee members. At this point it is up to the discretion of the Chair to attribute nominations to committee members. After the second round of nominations, the Chair distributes a cumulative list of nominated books. (These two lists may be combined). For each set of nominations, the Chair also sends the justification statements to committee members.

The Chair works as quickly as possible to get the nomination lists and justification statements distributed to committee members. Turn around time is a week or less. At the same time, nomination lists are also forwarded to the ALSC Awards Coordinator.

Serious consideration is to be given to all nominated books including those with minimal support. Sometimes only one committee member has seen a particular book. Sometimes support grows after re-readings or in comparison to other books under consideration.

After the second round of nominations, it becomes easier for the committee to make comparisons among nominated books and to weigh relative strengths and weaknesses with regard to the award criteria.

It is possible to make further suggestions once the nomination process is complete. Such suggestions appear on the Midwinter discussion list. These further suggestions allow committee members to move forward books published late in the year, and, in rare instances, a strong book previously overlooked.

The nomination process focuses attention on particular books. It does not limit the committee's reading. Committee members are expected to continue to identify, read, and consider other eligible books. Committee members also are expected to move strong books forward through the suggestion process if they are received after the nomination process is complete.

In summary, it is the responsibility of committee members to make nominations and submit written justification statements by the designated deadlines and to consider carefully all nominations, justification statements, and further suggestions moved forward after the nomination process is complete.

#### PARTICIPATION OF ALSC MEMBERSHIP

Offering ALSC members an opportunity to participate in the selection of the Geisel Award is an important process. It brings recognition to this award, first presented in 2006, and it also serves to develop interest in books for beginning readers.

It is the responsibility of the Chair to call for books to consider several times during the year through the ALSC-L electronic discussion list, the *ALSCMatters!* newsletter, on the ALSC website, and in *Children and Libraries: The Journal of the Association for Library Service to Children*. In addition, the Chair may call for books to consider on other electronic discussion lists having to do with children's literature. On an individual basis, committee members also may call for books to consider from members-at-large.

Books submitted for consideration by members-at-large are forwarded to the Chair. The Chair distributes this information to committee members in a timely manner. Books submitted for consideration by members-at-large are accepted up to two weeks before the Midwinter Selection Meeting.

The committee is not obligated to include books submitted for consideration by members-at-large on the Midwinter discussion list. Committee members consider these books along with all other eligible books when making monthly suggestions, nominations, or, late in the year, further suggestions. At the Midwinter Selection Meeting, only books nominated by committee members are considered, along with further suggestions from committee members moved forward after the nomination process is complete. Refer to Part II, *Midwinter Discussion List*.

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

- Encourage ALSC members-at-large to submit books for consideration throughout the year.
- Encourage and/or organize mock Geisel Award book discussions. (Results are welcomed 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 books on appropriate electronic discussion lists before selection and of the winners after selection.
- Interest local news media in covering the award.

It is recommended that the Chair establish contact with the Chairs of Newbery, Caldecott, Sibert, and Notable Children’s Book Committees in order to share common concerns and provide mutual support.

### 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 eligible books; meet designated suggestion and nomination 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. Refer to Part IV, “*Employee Address Request Form: Sample*,” “*Letter to Committee Members’ Employers/Supervisors (#1): Sample*,” and “*Letter to Committee Members’ Employers/Supervisors (#2): Sample*.”

In addition, committee members sometimes notify employers/supervisors about their work on the Geisel 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. Refer to Part IV, “*News Release Form: Sample*.”

At the Annual Conference, the committee usually practices book discussion. At the Midwinter Selection Meeting, full discussion of books under consideration is central to the selection process. For these book discussions, committee members are asked to adhere to helpful guidelines:

- Use good critical analysis; avoid plot summaries and generalities such as cute, nice, good, etc.
- Clarity – be clear in what you say, think through the point you are making, and speak loudly enough to be heard by everyone.
- Refer back to the criteria to keep the discussion focused.
- Be concise – be sure that what you have to say adds to the discussion; try not to repeat what others have said.
- Speak to the group as a whole. Listen openly to other committee members, and respond thoughtfully to what others have to say.
- Be courteous and refrain from relating personal anecdotes.
- Make comparisons but only in relationship to other eligible books. That is, do not compare a book with an author’s body of work or with books published before the year under consideration.

## FIRST MIDWINTER MEETING

The committee is strongly encouraged to meet at Midwinter of the year under consideration for an informal first meeting. The committee's year of service is officially underway, but it is not a required meeting. At this meeting, the Chair will introduce the members, may distribute the year's calendar if available, and often will invite experts in the field and past committee chairs to talk about evaluation techniques. No official business takes place. Books under consideration are not discussed, nor are any procedural issues decided. This is an open meeting. All other meetings of the committee will be closed meetings (closed to all but committee members)

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE MEETING (PRIOR TO THE MIDWINTER SELECTION MEETING)

The Annual Conference is important. It allows the committee time to prepare for the work ahead. The committee does not engage in the actual selection process. Selection takes place at the Midwinter Selection Meeting. The Chair will provide a short list of suggested books that will allow the committee to practice its discussion process.

### Preparation

Committee members and the Chair are responsible for making careful preparations for the Annual Conference Meeting.

### Committee Member Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of committee members to:

- **Obtain, read, and consider** all books on the practice discussion list prior to Annual.
- **Bring**

	Geisel Award Committee Manual.
	Pertinent committee communications.
	Personal notes about all books to be discussed.
	Reviews of books to be discussed (optional).
	Notes on books to be introduced formally into practice discussion. (In advance of Annual, the Chair assigns committee members to introduce books into discussion. Usually committee members are assigned books that they themselves suggested).
	Copies of books to be introduced for practice discussion.

### Chair Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Chair to:

- **Notify**

	The ALSC Awards Coordinator about which books have been suggested on an on-going basis and as soon as possible so that missing books can be requested from publishers in time to send to the meeting. The books are sent with the ALA trunk shipment two weeks prior to the meeting.
	The committee members about the times and locations of meetings.

- **Establish**

	A short list of suggested titles for practice book discussion.
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- **Check with the ALSC Awards Coordinator on**

	Meeting schedule as soon as possible. Work on scheduling concerns.
	Meeting room arrangement as soon as possible. A conference set-up is usually requested.
	Books under consideration. Trunks leave two week before the conference and the list of books to send to Annual must be received in time to pack the trunks. One copy of each book on the practice discussion list is sent to Annual by the office. Sometimes books are missing in which case the Chair specifically arranges for them to be on hand. It is necessary to have a book in hand for practice discussion of that book to take place.

- **Arrange for**

	Secretary to take minutes on procedural matters, but not on practice book discussion.
	A second set of books under consideration. Work with the committee. The Chair asks committee members to bring books that they are introducing formally into discussion.

- **Provide**

	A proposed agenda (distributed prior to Annual).
	A short list for the practice book discussion (distributed prior to Annual).
	Information packet for committee with a final agenda, discussion list, discussion guidelines, etc.
	Name tents for discussion table.

### Agenda

The agenda at Annual Conference includes:

- An opportunity for committee members to become re-acquainted.
- Discussion of terms, criteria, and definitions for Award Winner and Honor Books.
- Discussion of procedures to be used by the committee during the remainder of the year and at the Midwinter Selection Meeting.
- Review of responsibilities for committee members and the Chair.
- Discussion of the importance of full participation by committee members and the Chair.
- Discussion of what steps to take should full participation be impossible (e.g., how to tender a resignation).
- Review role of the Priority Group Consultant. At the discretion of the Chair, the Priority Group Consultant is invited to address the committee.
- Discussion of criteria for evaluating books for beginning readers. At the discretion of the Chair, an expert is invited to address the committee.
- Practice book discussion using a short list of suggested books.

The secretary takes minutes on the order of business and on procedural matters. No notes are taken on the practice book discussion. After Annual, the secretary prepares the minutes and sends them to the Chair. The Chair reviews the minutes and distributes them to committee members and submits them with the post-conference report.

### Book Discussion

It is important to remember that only the book discussion at Midwinter leads to final selection. Book discussion at Annual is for practice only. Therefore, it is not necessary to discuss a long list of books at Annual. The Chair establishes a short list well before Annual to allow committee members time to

prepare. This exercise serves several functions. It allows the committee to practice meaningful book discussion based on the award criteria, to raise and clarify procedural questions, and to become comfortable working together as a group.

### **Reports**

Prior to Annual Conference and within two weeks after the Annual Conference (prior to the Midwinter Selection Meeting), the Chair prepares and submits a report about the committee's work for the President, Vice President, Executive Director, Awards Coordinator, and Priority Group Consultant on the Pre and Post-Annual Conference Meeting Report forms (see the Division Leadership Manual and the ALSC website) and by the designated deadline. The agenda and minutes are submitted with the Post-Annual Conference Report form.

### MIDWINTER DISCUSSION LIST

All eligible books are considered throughout the year leading up to the Midwinter Selection Meeting. All eligible books remain under consideration up to the beginning of the Midwinter Selection Meeting.

Book discussion at the Midwinter Selection Meeting is limited to an established list of books. Those books have been identified as strong contenders through the suggestion process and the nomination process.

The following parameters apply:

- The Midwinter Discussion List is established using titles of books nominated by committee members and additional titles further suggested by committee members after the nomination process is complete.
- Books suggested by the committee throughout the year are also brought to the Midwinter Selection Meeting, and members may elect to add them to the final discussion list.
- No books may be added to the final discussion list once the Midwinter Selection Meeting begins. Therefore, it is important to adhere to all deadlines.
- Book titles submitted for consideration by ALSC members-at-large need to be received by the Chair two weeks prior to the Midwinter Selection Meeting to allow for careful consideration. Throughout the year, the Chair collects such titles and distributes them to the committee in a timely manner. The committee is not obligated to include book titles submitted for consideration by members-at-large on the Midwinter discussion list. Committee members consider these titles along with all other eligible books when making monthly suggestions, nominations, or, late in the year, further suggestions. At the Midwinter Selection Meeting, only books nominated or suggested by committee members are considered.

## MIDWINTER SELECTION MEETING

The Midwinter Selection Meeting is all-important. It results in the selection of the award winner and the possible selection of Honor Books. There is much to accomplish at Midwinter.

### Preparation

Committee members and the Chair are responsible for making careful preparations for the Midwinter Selection Meeting as listed below.

#### Committee Member Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of committee members to:

- **Obtain, read, and consider** all books on the Midwinter discussion list prior to the Midwinter Selection Meeting.
- **Bring**

	Geisel Award Committee Manual.
	Pertinent committee communications.
	Personal notes about all books under consideration.
	Reviews of books under consideration (optional).
	Justification statements for all books under consideration.
	Notes on books to be introduced formally into discussion. (In advance of Midwinter, the Chair assigns committee members to introduce books into discussion. Usually committee members are assigned books that they themselves nominated).
	Copies of books to be introduced for discussion.
	Copies of any other books under consideration that may require re-reading (optional).
	Biographical information on authors and illustrators represented on discussion list. Committee members are sometimes asked to bring such information for the authors of books that they formally introduce into discussion (at request of the Chair).

#### Chair Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Chair to:

- **Notify**

	The ALSC Awards Coordinator about which books have been suggested on an on-going basis and as soon as possible so that missing books can be requested from publishers in time to send to the meeting. The books are sent with the ALA trunk shipment two weeks prior to the meeting.
	The committee members about the times and locations of meetings.

- **Establish**

	A Midwinter book discussion list.
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- **Check with the ALSC Awards Coordinator**

	Meeting schedule as soon as possible. Work on scheduling concerns. Schedule submitted to Conference Services in mid-September by the office.
	Meeting room arrangement as soon as possible. A conference set-up is usually requested.
	Books under consideration. Trunks leave two week before the conference and the list of books to send to Midwinter must be received in time to pack the trunks. One copy of each book on the practice discussion list is sent to Midwinter by the office. Sometimes books are missing in which case the Chair specifically arranges for them to be on hand. It is

	necessary to have a book in hand for practice discussion of that book to take place.
	When and where the notification phone calls will take place. They usually occur on Sunday evening at the PAO Office in the Convention Center. It depends upon the time zone where Midwinter is located.

- **Attend**

	ALA Youth Media Awards (YMA) Press Conference Informational Meeting. The meeting is usually held on Friday evening. The committee is responsible for creating and submitting a press release for the Geisel Award and Honor selections.
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- **Arrange for**

	Access to the meeting room. The committee usually has an exclusive use room during the Midwinter Selection meeting. The ALSC Awards Coordinator will notify you on how to obtain the key in early January.
	Biographical information on authors represented on the discussion list. Work with the committee. The Chair may ask committee members to bring such information for the authors of books that they formally introduce into discussion.
	A second set of books under consideration. Work with the committee. The Chair asks committee members to bring books that they are introducing into discussion. The result is having two sets of books which is helpful for purposes of re-reading and for writing the press release.
	Secretary and tellers (2).

- **Provide**

	Information packet for committee with agendas, discussion list, discussion guidelines, etc.
	An established agenda (distributed to committee prior to Midwinter).
	Name labels for discussion table.
	Office supplies/equipment (computer, calculator, camera, thesaurus, etc).
	Tally sheets and selection ballots for voting.

## **Agenda**

### Introductions

Reintroduce committee members.

### Jobs

Explain roles of secretary and tellers. Prior to the Midwinter Selection Meeting, several committee members are asked by the Chair to serve in these roles:

- **Secretary:** Takes minutes on order of business and all procedural matters. No minutes are kept on book discussions or balloting. The secretary turns in the minutes to the Chair at the end of the Midwinter Selection Meeting. The Chair turns the minutes in to the Executive Director at the conclusion of Midwinter attached to the post-Midwinter Report.
- **Tellers (2):** Tabulate and double-check all selection ballots and tally sheets. The tellers turn all selection ballots and tally sheets over to Chair after the Midwinter Selection Meeting. The Chair turns the selection ballots and tally sheets over to the Awards Coordinator at the conclusion of Midwinter.

### Discussion of Voting Procedures:

Discuss voting procedures for winner and possible Honor Books.

- Review voting procedure for selecting the winner. See below.
- Decide order for discussion of books, ordinarily alphabetical by author unless similar titles are considered together.
- Review possible voting procedures for selecting Honor Books should the committee decide to do so. See below.

### Book Discussion

Each book nominated or suggested will be considered. Many committees have found it helpful to first go through the list members have suggested, but not nominated, and ask if a member wishes to bring any of these suggested books up for consideration. Any book that does not seem a serious contender may be eliminated at this time by some agreed upon procedure. Once this is completed, full discussion of each book remaining on the nominated list takes place.

Once a book has been eliminated it cannot be reintroduced.

Books are discussed one by one in the first round of discussion. After all books have been discussed, it is possible to re-open discussion on selected titles before moving to a selection ballot. Important guidelines apply:

- Discussion is focused first on a book's strengths before its weaknesses.
- Discussion is as even-handed as possible. Books do not always require the same length of discussion.
- Discussion is meaningful, that is, based on the award criteria.
- Discussion of each book concludes with a closing statement from the committee member who introduced it formally into discussion. This practice provides for balance—the negative and the positive. (optional)

### Balloting

When there is consensus that all the books on the discussion list are fully discussed, the committee proceeds to a selection ballot. Refer to Part IV, "*Selection Ballot: Sample*" for a sample selection ballot.

Certain procedures apply:

- Committee members list first, second, and third place votes for the award on a selection ballot.
- In tabulating ballot results, the tellers assign four points to each first place vote, three points to each second place vote, and two points to each third place vote.

There is a formula to determine the winner.

A book must receive at least four first place votes at four points per vote for a total of at least 16 points. In addition, that book must have a four-point lead over the book receiving the next highest number of points.

### Tally.

Once balloting is complete, the tellers tabulate the results. Refer to "Part IV, *Voting Tally Sheet: Sample*" for a sample tally sheet. The tabulations are double-checked, and the Chair reads the results aloud to the committee. Depending on the results, certain steps are taken:

- If there is a winner, the committee proceeds to considering whether or not to select Honor Books. The same voting procedure is used as for the award winner.
- If the first ballot does not produce a winner, the committee follows procedures for re-balloting.

### Re-Balloting

The committee may not proceed to another ballot without a second round of book discussion. At this point, certain choices present themselves, and certain procedures apply:

- By consensus the committee may choose to withdraw from the discussion list all books that received no votes on the first ballot.
- By consensus the committee may choose to withdraw additional books that received minimal support on the first ballot.
- Once withdrawn from the discussion list, a book is permanently eliminated from consideration for the award.
- Once a second round of discussion is complete, the committee proceeds to a second ballot.
- On a second ballot (and, if necessary on subsequent ballots), votes are tabulated by the tellers who use the same point system and formula as in the first round to determine a winner.
- If after a second ballot, there is still no winner, the committee is required to re-open discussion and then re-ballot, alternating between discussion and re-balloting until a winner is selected.

#### Honor Books.

Once a winner is selected, the issue of Honor Books is addressed. The terms of the award provide parameters:

- There is no requirement that Honor Books be named.
- There is no rule dictating the number of Honor Books to be named.
- There is the expectation that Honor Books be truly distinguished, not merely strong contenders for the award.

The committee first considers whether or not to select Honor Books. If it decides there are to be none, the selection process is complete. If Honor Books are to be chosen, the selection process proceeds. At this point, certain choices present themselves:

- Whether or not to use the winning selection ballot to choose Honor Books. The committee looks at titles with the next highest number of points.
- Whether or not to ballot one more time. Only one additional ballot is allowed. The Honor Book selection ballot consists of titles from the winning selection ballot that received points. (Of course, the winner is eliminated.) By consensus, titles with no remaining support also may be withdrawn.

The committee studies the ballot tally (either from the winning selection ballot or from one subsequent ballot on Honor Books), and the committee determines which books committee members deem to be truly distinguished.

Honor Books are announced to the public in alphabetical order by title to confer equal status for both the author and illustrator.

#### MIDWINTER: AFTER SELECTION

Once the committee completes the selection process, there is still work to be done.

#### **Review of Confidentiality Policy**

It is imperative for committee members to maintain secrecy regarding the selection outcome prior to the ALA YMA Press Conference. It is also important for committee members to be mindful of confidentiality issues going forward.

The committee's reasons for selection of the winner and Honor Books are explained by the Chair who is responsible for preparing the press release for PAO with help, if necessary, from the committee.

The above rules are not intended to limit the free speech of committee members. Rather, the rules are intended to protect the privacy of committee members, allowing them to speak frankly in closed meetings and to speak for themselves outside of those meetings. Confidentiality is intended to foster debate leading up to selection and to present unanimity once the selection is announced.

Employees of the winners' publishing companies are informed of the committee's selections when the ALSC Executive Director contacts them to obtain author(s)/illustrator(s) contact information. The winners are notified shortly after by the committee.

It is imperative for committee members and for the winning authors and their publishers to keep secret the selection outcome prior to the ALA YMA Press Conference. Maintaining secrecy minimizes "information leaks" and misinformation. Maintaining secrecy also ensures the stature of the award and preserves the element of surprise.

### **Drafting of Press Release and Preparation of Background Information**

The committee re-convenes after the selection process is complete to prepare a draft press release and information requested by PAO. Responsibilities are:

- The Chair divides preparation responsibilities among committee members and edits their work for continuity. Biographical information about the winning authors and justification statements about the winning books are used as background.
- The Chair provides the draft press release and requested information to PAO by the designated deadline and in the designated format.
- PAO finalizes the press release to be distributed immediately after the ALA YMA Press Conference. The press release is available in print and on the ALA and ALSC websites. Refer to Part IV, *Press Release: Sample*.

### **Recommendations**

After the selection process is complete, if it so chooses, the Chair and the committee may make recommendations regarding selection policies, practices, and procedures. These recommendations go to the new Chair, the President, Vice President, Executive Director, and the Priority Consultant. The recommendations cover internal changes, changes in the working relationship with the ALSC staff, and/or matters requiring Board action.

### **Award and Honor Book Notification Phone Calls**

Usually on Sunday evening, the Chair and committee notifies the winning author(s) and publisher(s) by phone. Calls are made from a committee members' hotel room so that they are made privately and confidentiality is maintained prior to the announcement.

- Check with hotel to see if speakerphone capability exists on guest room phone. If you are not able to find a hotel that has speaker phone option on guest room phones, then check with committee members' to see if anyone's cell phone has speaker phone option. If the committee incurs phone charges from a hotel phone, follow the reimbursement process in the Division Leadership Manual.
- Depending upon the Executive Director's schedule, publishers are contacted late Sunday afternoon or early evening to obtain author/illustrator phone numbers. Once all phone numbers have been obtained for your awardees (probably after 5:30 depending on publisher availability), the Chair will receive notice to return to the PAO office to pick up the phone numbers.

- You can make your calls any time after receiving the numbers but please do be mindful of the time zone you are calling from and to.
- You will receive a call sheet with the appropriate phone numbers and tips for placing the call (how to introduce yourself, what to do if no one answers, etc.).
- It is not uncommon for an author/illustrator to be unavailable by phone and the announcement made without their knowledge.

### **ALA Youth Media Awards Press Conference**

The committee convenes at the PAO headquarters on the morning of the ALA YMA Press Conference. Usually the committee is asked to pose for a group photograph. A PAO staff member will notify the Chair of when the committee is scheduled to be photographed as all twenty ALA award committees are scheduled that morning. It is essential that all members are present a few minutes before the scheduled time to avoid delays. It is essential that the press conference start on time.

At the ALA YMA Press Conference, the President announces the winner of the Geisel Award and, if chosen, the Honor Books. Other award announcements include the Batchelder, Belpré, Caldecott, Carnegie, Coretta Scott King, Newbery, Odyssey, Printz, Schneider, Sibert, and Wilder Awards. Seats are usually reserved for the various committees at the front of the room. Committee members are usually asked to stand for recognition when the award is announced.

## **AFTER MIDWINTER SELECTION MEETING**

### **Public Relations**

Committee members work with their local news media in publicizing ALSC awards and other ALA children's book awards. If interviewed, committee members emphasize the importance of distinguished books for beginning readers, the award criteria, and the committee's reasons for its choices as stated in the press release. Committee members are free to express their own views on particular books, but they need to be mindful of confidentiality issues.

### **Correspondence**

The Chair handles correspondence specific to his/her committee's selection and work. In particular, the Chair sends a letter of appreciation to the employers/supervisors of committee members. Refer to Part IV, "*Letter to Committee Members' Employer/Supervisor (#2): Sample.*"

### **Report**

The Chair prepares and submits a report about the committee's work to the ALSC President, Vice President, Executive Director, Awards Coordinator, and Priority Group Consultant using the online Committee Quarterly Report Form by the February 15<sup>th</sup> deadline (see the Division Leadership Manual and the ALSC website).

### **Preparation for the Award Presentation**

The Chair works with the ALSC Awards Coordinator to make necessary arrangements for presentation of the award. Communication with the winning author(s), illustrators (s) and publisher(s) is paramount. The office will send letters of congratulation to the winners and publishers. The Chair may also send notes of congratulation, if desired, with copies of communication sent to be sent to the ALSC office.

In addition, the Chair prepares remarks for the award presentation at the Annual Conference (see below).

## AWARD PRESENTATION

At the Annual Conference following the Midwinter Selection Meeting, the Geisel Award is presented at the ALSC Awards Presentation before the Annual Membership Meeting. The winning author(s) and illustrator(s) each receive a bronze medal, and the Honor Book author(s) and illustrator(s) receive certificates mounted on plaques. Although committee members are not required to be present, most find a special satisfaction in being part of the audience on this important occasion.

In making the award presentation, the Chair:

- Introduces committee members.
- Makes prepared remarks, explaining why the committee deemed the winning book and, if chosen, the Honor Books as truly distinguished with regard to the award criteria.
- Introduces the winning author(s) and illustrator(s), and, if chosen, the Honor Book authors and illustrators, and presents the awards to them.

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

INTRODUCTION

COMMITTEE CHAIR

PRIORITY GROUP CONSULTANT

ALSC STAFF

ALSC MEMBERSHIP

ALSC BOOK AWARD AND NOTABLE CHILDREN'S BOOKS COMMITTEE

CHAIRS

ALSC BOARD

ALSC PRESIDENT

PUBLIC AWARENESS OFFICE (PAO)

## INTRODUCTION

The Geisel Committee is responsible for selecting the award winner and, if it so chooses, Honor Books. The Geisel 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 Consultant, ALSC (staff, membership, award and Notable Children’s Books Committee chairs, the ALSC Board, and the ALSC President), and the ALA Public Awareness Office have specific roles and responsibilities. The checklists below with those roles and responsibilities are comprehensive but not exhaustive:

### COMMITTEE CHAIR: RESPONSIBILITIES

#### General

	Sends welcome letter to members with procedural information.	ASAP
	Sends congratulations letter to employer/supervisor of committee members. ASAP	ASAP
	Establishes calendar for year and distributes it to committee.	ASAP
	Checks to see that Geisel Award Committee Manual is sent to committee members by the ALSC Awards Coordinator.	ASAP
	Creates a mail roster (work, home, e-mail, fax with preferences) based on roster information received from the ALSC Awards Coordinator.	ASAP
	Communicates with the ALSC Awards Coordinator about meeting schedules and room arrangements for Annual and Midwinter meetings.	on-going
	Keeps in touch with committee members about which books are not readily available ongoing	
	Notifies publishers about which books committee members have not seen. ongoing	
	Solicits suggestions/distributes suggestions list to committee. After first round of suggestions, distributes cumulative lists as well.	monthly
	Calls for nominations and justification statements/distributes nomination lists and justification statements to committee. After second round of nominations, distributes a cumulative list of nominated books.	Oct. and Dec.
	Invites ALSC members-at-large to submit books for consideration. Uses ALSC-L electronic discussion list (EDL), <i>ALSCMatters!</i> newsletter, ALSC website and <i>Children and Libraries</i> . (optional: other publications and EDL’s about children’s literature).	on-going
	Distributes lists of book titles for consideration submitted by ALSC members-at-large to committee.	on-going
	Forwards suggestions lists and nomination lists to the ALSC staff.	on-going
	Maintains database of suggestions and nominations to include titles of all books suggested and nominated (author, publisher, illustrator); # of suggestions; # of nominations; date of suggestion and nomination; names of those suggesting and nominating each title; and committee member assigned to introduce formally books into discussion at Midwinter Selection Meeting. on-going	
	Consults with Priority Group Consultant on procedural and personnel issues and on eligibility questions.	on-going

Answers all correspondence promptly (committee, ALSC, and general).	on-going
Copies appropriate correspondence to committee members, Awards Coordinator, ALSC President and Vice President, and to Priority Group Consultant.	on-going
Facilitates committee e-mail discussions as needed.	on-going
Sends appreciation letters to committee and members' supervisors at outset and conclusion of service	
Works with committee members not fully participating and after consultation with Priority Consultant, recommends resignation.	on-going
Attends Division Leadership meetings as schedule permits.	on-going

### **Annual Conference (before Midwinter Selection Meeting) and Midwinter Selection Meeting**

Works with ALSC Awards Coordinator on all meeting arrangements: scheduling, room assignment, discussion list of books to be provided, etc. on-going	
Notifies committee members as to meeting schedule and place.	ASAP
Sets agendas for Annual and Midwinter Meetings/distributes proposed agendas to committee and attached to Pre-meeting reports ahead of meetings.	May and Dec.
Develops and distributes roster of committee members' hotel addresses for communication.	May and Dec.
Prepares and distributes list of books to be discussed to committee members and the ALSC Awards Coordinator.	May and Dec.
Prepares information packets for committee members with agendas, discussion lists, discussion guidelines, etc.	May and Dec.
Keeps committee members and ALSC Awards Coordinator informed of late suggestions.	Dec. and Jan.
Submits a final cumulative list of suggested/nominated books that are to be sent to meeting in time for the ALA trunk shipment	No later than 15 days before the start of Annual or Midwinter
Conducts Annual and Midwinter Selection Meetings.	Annual and Midwinter
Assigns committee secretary (prior to meetings).	June and Jan.
Assigns tellers (prior to Midwinter Selection Meeting).	Midwinter
Arranges for necessary supplies/equipment (books, ballots, name cards, tally sheets, office sundries, calculator, computer, camera, thesaurus, etc).	prior to Annual and Midwinter
Arranges for committee members to introduce formally books into discussion (for Annual, usually books they have suggested and for Midwinter, usually books they have nominated).	May and Dec.
Arranges to have biographical information on strong contenders available at Midwinter.	prior to Midwinter
Gathers phone numbers for authors of books considered strong contenders to back up ALSC staff (optional).	prior to Midwinter
Asks committee members to make recommendations regarding policies, practices, and procedures. Recommendations cover internal changes, changes in the working relationship with ALSC staff and PAO, and/or matters requiring Board action.	at end of Midwinter Selection Meeting
Attends ALA YMA Press Conference briefing.	

Midwinter	(usually Friday evening)
Oversees preparation of press release and information for PAO/submits in designated format along with winning books to PAO by designated deadline.	Midwinter
With committee, notifies winners and their publishers by phone the night before the ALA YMA Press Conference.	Midwinter
Attends ALA YMA Press Conference and has photo taken with committee members.	Midwinter
Reviews and distributes minutes from Annual to committee members.	after Annual
Submits minutes, ballots, and tally sheets to ALSC Awards Coordinator.	at end of Midwinter Selection Meeting
Prepares committee report (attach minutes) on Annual and Midwinter meetings for ALSC President, Vice President, Executive Director, Awards Coordinator, and Priority Group Consultant.	after Annual and Midwinter Selection meetings

#### After Midwinter Selection Meeting

Sends appreciation letters to committee members and to committee members' employers/supervisors.	after Midwinter
Submits committee recommendations regarding policies, practices, and procedures to new Chair, President, Vice President, Executive Director, Awards Coordinator, and Priority Group Consultant.	after Midwinter
Contacts publishers of winning books to answer questions about the award presentation and make sure authors and illustrators are clear on arrangements.	after Midwinter
Invites committee members to award presentation.	after Midwinter
Prepares comments for award presentation.	after Midwinter

#### Annual Conference (after Midwinter Selection Meeting)

Greets award winners and publishers.	Awards Presentation
Introduces committee members to audience as part of award presentation.	Awards Presentation
Presents Geisel Award and Honor Book awards, prefaced by prepared remarks about why each book was selected.	Awards Presentation

#### PRIORITY GROUP CONSULTANT: RESPONSIBILITIES

Assists Chair with procedural, personnel, and eligibility questions.	on-going
Assists members with unusual issues, particularly those having to do with Chair.	on-going
Attends committee meeting at Annual Conference to explain role (at request of Chair).	June

## ALSC STAFF: RESPONSIBILITIES

### General

	Checks eligibility for membership of committee appointments. (Prog. Coord) before notification	
	Notifies members appointed by President. (ED & PC) before Nov. in year before work begins	
	Distributes manuals to committee members upon acceptance of appointment. (AC) before Nov. in year before work begins	
	Maintains a collection of all books suggested and nominated for the award based on lists sent by Chair. (AC) on-going	
	Supplies publishers with a committee roster/posts committee roster on ALSC Awards web page.(AC) Immediately after Midwinter of year under consideration	
	Works with Chair on meeting schedule, meeting room set-up and logistics for optional Midwinter, Annual (prior to Midwinter Selection Meeting) and Midwinter Selection Meeting. (AC) on-going	
	Assists with call for ALSC members-at-large to submit book titles for consideration (ALSC publications and ALSC-L electronic discussion list). (Comm Prog. Officer- CO) on-going	

### Annual Conference (before Midwinter Selection Meeting) and Midwinter Selection Meeting

	Provides one copy of each book on discussion lists and notifies Chair of any books that cannot be provided. (AC) @May and December	
	Arranges for Chair to have key to meeting rooms. (AC) Midwinter	
	Provides phone numbers for winning author(s) and/or publishers. (ED) Midwinter	
	Works with PAO on arrangements for announcement: phoning winners, ALA YMA Press Conference, press release, distribution of press release in print and on ALSC website, etc. (ED, AC, CO) Midwinter	
	Works with President on ALSC portion of the ALA YMA Press Conference. (ED) Midwinter	

### After Midwinter Selection Meeting

	Works with winners and their publishers regarding award presentation and winner's speech. (ED) after Midwinter	
	Works with winner's publisher to arrange for printed Award Presentation program. (ED) after Midwinter	
	Works with President on arrangement for award presentation. (ED) after Midwinter	
	Handles office correspondence related to the awards. (ED) on-going	
	Contacts representative(s) of Random House to issue formal invitation to Award Presentation as a courtesy for their assistance (non-financial) in the establishment of the award (ED) after Midwinter	
	Arranges for medal and certificates. (AC) after Midwinter	
	Provides Chair with information on award presentation (timing, what needs to be covered, etc). (ED) after Midwinter	

### Annual Conference (after Midwinter Selection Meeting)

	Brings medal and certificates to Conference. Annual	
	Handles last minute details related to Award Presentation Program Annual	

ALSC MEMBERSHIP: ROLE

	Submits book titles for consideration.	on-going
	Promotes community interest in the award/distributes information about award.	on-going
	Promotes and participates in mock Geisel Award discussions	on-going
	Attend Award Presentation Program and Annual Membership Meeting Annual after Midwinter Selection Meeting	

ALSC BOOK AWARD (NEWBERY, CALDECOTT, GEISEL & SIBERT) AND NOTABLE CHILDREN'S BOOK COMMITTEE CHAIRS: ROLE

	Confer with other Chairs about common concerns and provide mutual support (optional).	on-going
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ALSC BOARD: RESPONSIBILITIES

	Regularly, and on request, reviews, reaffirms, and/or changes terms and procedures for award selection.	on-going
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ALSC PRESIDENT: RESPONSIBILITIES

	Appoints six committee members plus a Chair	Fall of year before work begins
	Fills vacancies as needed.	on-going
	Deals with conflict of interest or with problem of committee member participation in consultation with the Executive Committee and Priority Group Consultant.	on-going
	Promotes the award along with others.	on-going
	Presides over award announcement at ALA YMA Press Conference and convene during the year ALSC is assigned.	Midwinter Selection Meeting
	Presides over ALSC Awards Presentation and Membership Meeting.	Annual (after Midwinter Selection Meeting)

PUBLIC AWARENESS OFFICE (PAO): RESPONSIBILITIES

	Provides guidelines for preparation of press release. Requests books to scan cover and make available to press. Meeting	Requests books to scan cover and make available to press. prior to Midwinter Selection Meeting
	Designates format and deadlines for submission of press release and books needed to fact check press release.	prior to Midwinter Selection Meeting
	Distributes press releases in print immediately after the ALA YMA Press Conference and for the ALSC website based on information submitted by committee.	Midwinter Selection Meeting
	Briefs Chair on ALA YMA Press Conference.	Midwinter Selection Meeting
	Arranges for ALA YMA Press Conference.	Midwinter Selection Meeting

## **PART IV: SAMPLES**

*Guidelines for Electronic Communication*

*Calendar: Sample*

*Employer/Supervisor Information Form: Sample*

*Letter to Committee Members' Employers/Supervisors (#1): Sample*

*Letter to Committee Members' Employers/Supervisors (#2): Sample*

*News Release Form: Sample*

*Award Announcement/Call for Suggestions: Sample*

*Note-taking Form: Sample (Optional)*

*Nomination Ballot (#1): Sample*

*Nomination Ballot (#2): Sample*

*Justification Statement: Sample*

*Midwinter Discussion List: Sample*

*Selection Ballot: Sample*

*Voting Tally Sheet: Sample*

*Press Release: Sample*

*Geisel Award Announcement*

*List of Past Geisel Winners and Honor Book Recipients*

**Guidelines for Electronic Communication for ALSC Committees**  
**Adopted by ALSC Board on January 18, 2000, revised January 2012.**

**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 chose 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 are required to announce their electronic agendas on ALA Connect well in advance of decision deadlines and solicit comments from the membership.

## **7. Virtual participation on traditional committees.**

7.1. The ALSC 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 to 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.

## Calendar: Sample

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### THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL AWARD

#### Committee Calendar, 2005 – 2006

January/February	ALA Midwinter Meeting: first committee meeting. Optional attendance
April 5	Suggestions due*
May 3	Suggestions due*
June 7	Suggestions due*
June 24-25	ALA Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois Award Organization and Discussion (mandatory attendance) Meeting times TBA
August 2	Suggestions due*
September 6	Suggestions due*
October 4	Suggestions due*
October 11	<b>NOMINATIONS #1</b> due (use form #1)**
November 1	Suggestions due*
December 6	Suggestions due*
December 13	<b>NOMINATIONS #2</b> due (use form #2)**
January 3	Suggestions due (for late submissions only)
January 22-25	ALA Midwinter Meeting, San Antonio, TX Award Selection (mandatory attendance) Meeting times TBA
June 22-28	ALA Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA Award Presentation, ALSC Membership Meeting Optional attendance

\*Suggestions are due on the first Tuesday of each month with the exception of July.

\*\*Nominations are due on the second Tuesday of October and December

**THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL AWARD**  
*Employer/Supervisor Information: Sample*

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

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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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**THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL AWARD**  
*Letter to Employer/ Supervisor #1: Sample*

April, 2005

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

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

This is an especially exciting assignment. The Geisel Award is new and most welcome, and, in this the pioneer year, there will be much to accomplish. Not only will the Committee select the most distinguished American book for beginning readers and perhaps additional Honor Books. The Committee will also be establishing procedures and standards for the future.

Well over 5000 trade books are published for children each year, and many are books appropriate for beginning readers. 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 beginning reader book. 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 Washington, D.C. We will meet to make our selections in January 2008 in Philadelphia, PA. The award presentation will be at the ALSC Award Presentation and Membership Meeting in Anaheim, CA in 2008.

Thank you again for your support during this selection process.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, 2008 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award Committee

**THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL AWARD**  
*Letter to Employer / Supervisor #2: Sample*

March, 2006

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

Please accept our congratulations and gratitude for your support of \_\_\_\_\_ upon completion of his/her term on the 2006 Theodor Seuss Geisel 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:

Winner:

***Henry and Mudge and the Great Grandpas*** by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Sucie Stevenson and published by Simon & Schuster

In addition, there are four Honor Books.

***Hi! Fly Guy*** by Tedd Arnold and published by Cartwheel Books, an imprint of Scholastic Inc.;

***A Splendid Friend, Indeed*** by Suzanne Bloom and published by Boyds Mills Press;

***Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa*** by Erica Silverman, illustrated by Betsy Lewin and published by Harcourt;

***Amanda Pig and the Really Hot Day*** by Jean Van Leeuwen, illustrated by Ann Schweninger and published by Dial Books for Young Readers, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group.

This was an exciting pioneer assignment. Not only did the Committee select a winner and Honor Books, the Committee also established procedures and standards for the future.

Well over 5000 trade books are published for children each year, and many are books for beginning readers. 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 Geisel Committee met in June at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. We met in San Antonio in January to make our selections. The awards were first presented at the ALSC Membership Meeting in New Orleans in June, 2006.

On behalf of ALSC I thank you for your support during this exciting first year of the Geisel Award. \_\_\_\_\_ was instrumental in launching the award and setting the highest standards in the body of American children's literature known as beginning reader books.

Thank you again for your support of \_\_\_\_\_ and the 2006 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, 2006 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award Committee

## THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL AWARD

*News Release Form: Sample*

Committee members sometimes notify employers/supervisors about their work on the Geisel Committee independently. Also, they often notify local newspapers, professional organizations, and/or their own alumni organizations independently or through library public relations departments. The resulting notice underscores individual participation as well as the work of ALSC and ALA. Below is a sample news release form:

From: \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

\_\_\_\_\_ is named to position in National Library Group.  
your name and/or position

\_\_\_\_\_ will serve as \_\_\_\_\_ on the  
your name position (member or chair)

Theodor Seuss Geisel Award Committee. The Committee is charged with selecting annually the most distinguished American book for beginning readers published in the United States. Honor Books may be named. The Geisel Committee operates under the direction of the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association.

Include a brief statement of your professional responsibilities/activities.

The American Library Association serves as a voice of America's libraries and the people who depend on them. ALA promotes the highest quality library and information services and protects public access to information. There are nearly 64,000 members worldwide. It is the oldest and largest library association in the world with members in academic, public, school, government, and special libraries.

The Association for Library Service to Children is concerned with

- the evaluation of library materials for children;
- improving and expanding library services for children and those who work with them in all library settings;
- advocating the rights of children within and beyond libraries;
- supporting the professional development of members;
- supporting research and study in these areas.

## THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL AWARD

### *Award Announcement/Call for Suggestions: Sample*

The Chair calls on ALSC members-at-large to submit book titles for consideration by the committee. The Chair posts an announcement on the ALSC-L electronic discussion list, in *ALSCMatters!* (the ALSC newsletter), in *Children and Libraries* and on the ALSC website several times during the year. The Chair may also solicit suggestions from other electronic discussion lists having to do with children's literature. Here is an example:

In-Put Wanted: The ALSC/Theodor Seuss Geisel Award Committee is asking the ALSC membership to submit book titles for consideration. The Geisel Award is presented annually to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished American book for beginning readers published in English during the preceding year. Honor Books may be named.

Beginning reader books are defined as those written and illustrated with creativity and imagination to engage children pre-K through grade 2 in reading. Authors must be U.S. citizens or residents. For the complete terms and criteria, please refer to the ALSC website.

The award will be announced at the ALA Youth Media Awards Press Conference during the ALA Midwinter Conference to be held in [Place, Month, Year]. The award will be presented at the ALSC Monday Awards Program during the ALA Annual Conference to be held in [Place, Month, Year]

The 2013 Geisel Committee calls on ALSC personal members to submit titles for consideration. Please remember: Only books from the 2012 publishing year are under consideration for the award. Also, please note that publishers, authors, illustrators, or editors may not nominate their own titles.

Please send suggestions to \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.  
Chair's name      E-mail address

**THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL AWARD**  
**Note-taking Form (Optional):**

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**Title:**  
**Author**  
**Illustrator**  
**Publisher**

---

I suggested:    Yes    No

I nominated:    Yes    No

Subject/Summary

---

Quality of Writing (distinctive use of language, vocabulary, sentence length)

Quality of illustration (distinctive visual material, “provides keys or clues to the text”)

Quality of Design (size of typeface, line length and spacing, use of white space, placement of illustrations)

For informational Books:

Accuracy (author authority; current, etc); Organization (appropriate scope and sequence);

Documentation (appropriate citations to allow verification of facts)

Clarity (delineation of fact and theory; Stimulating presentation of facts, concepts, and ideas; Features (index, table of contents, bibliography, glossary, graphics, author note, etc)

Child Audience (must be directed at readers from pre-K through Grade 2)

**Strengths**

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**Weaknesses**

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**Comments**

---

Reviews: BCCB Booklist Horn Book Kirkus PW SLJ Other

---

**Sample Ballot #1**  
**THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL AWARD**

**Nomination Ballot #1 (Three nominations due October X, 2XXX)**

I recommend to the committee for consideration for The Theodore Seuss Geisel Award the following three books (not in preferential order):

1. Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_

Illustrator \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

2. Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_

Illustrator \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

3. Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_

Illustrator \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

On another page, please write your justification statements—your reasons for nominating these books with regard to the award criteria. (Statements are usually no more than 100 words). 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 Tuesday, October X, 2XXX. (Delivery deadline for e-mail, U.S. Mail, and FAX as well).

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

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

**Sample Ballot #2**  
**THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL AWARD**

**Nomination Ballot #2** (Three nominations due December X, 2XXX)

**I recommend to the committee for consideration for the Theodore Seuss Geisel Beginning Reader Award the following three books (not in preferential order):**

**1. Title** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Illustrator** \_\_\_\_\_

**Publisher** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Title** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Illustrator** \_\_\_\_\_

**Publisher** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Title** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Illustrator** \_\_\_\_\_

**Publisher** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name** **Date**

**On another page, please write your justification statements—your reasons for nominating these books with regard to the award criteria. (Statements are usually no more than 100 words). 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 Tuesday, December X, 2XXX. (Delivery deadline for e-mail, U.S. Mail, and FAX as well).**

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

**Mailing address:** \_\_\_\_\_



**THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL AWARD**  
*Selection Ballot: Sample*  
**SELECTION BALLOT**

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

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

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

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

**THEODOR SEUSS GEISEL AWARD**

*Voting Tally Sheet: Sample*

Title/author/illustrator	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

For Immediate Release  
Mon, 01/23/2012 - 09:16  
Contact: [Macey Morales](#)  
ALSC , Public Awareness Office (PAO)

### **Josh Schneider wins Geisel Award for 'Tales for Very Picky Eaters'**

DALLAS— Author and illustrator Josh Schneider is the 2012 recipient of the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award for “Tales for Very Picky Eaters,” published by Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. The award was announced today by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), during the ALA Midwinter Meeting held Jan. 20 – 24 in Dallas.

The Theodor Seuss Geisel Award is given to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished American book for beginning readers published in English in the United States during the preceding year. The award is named for the world-renowned children’s author, Theodor Geisel, a.k.a. Dr. Seuss. Award winners are recognized for their literary and artistic achievements that demonstrate creativity and imagination to engage children in reading. Award and honor book recipients will receive their awards in Anaheim, Calif., during the ALA Annual Conference in June.

Each of the five chapters in “Tales for Very Picky Eaters” recounts James’ refusal to eat yet another disgusting, smelly, repulsive, lumpy or slimy food. Not only picky eaters, but all readers will delight in the outrageous suggestions along with the off the wall rationale from his very clever dad for why he should become more adventurous in his food selections. James turns the table on his father when he decides to become more daring and bold in his meal choices and actually tries something new.

Josh Schneider, who writes that “he is very brave and can eat lots of scary foods (but he doesn’t)” perfectly captures the attitude of the picky eater. The illustrations have a cartoon-flavor and are executed in watercolor, pen and ink, and colored pencil.

“The dialogue presents some preposterous situations but even the most challenging words are presented in context so beginning readers can easily discern their meaning. The touches of humor make this book an engaging page turner,” said Geisel Award Committee Chair Carole D. Fiore.

Three Geisel Honor Books were named:

“I Broke My Trunk,” written and illustrated by Mo Willems and published by Hyperion Books for Children, an imprint of Disney Book Group.

In this installment of Elephant and Piggie’s adventures, Piggie is very concerned because his best friend, Gerald the Elephant, has broken his trunk. Gerald proceeds to tell Piggie a long, rambling story about how it happened.

Willems, who has previously garnered 3 Caldecott honors, 2 Geisel medals and 1 honor, used meticulously chosen words and sparingly drawn illustrations to convey the humorous situation. The pacing is masterful and will keep young readers turning the pages until they reach the surprising yet

satisfying conclusion. The illustrations artfully show each character's emotions through their facial expressions and body language.

The big, bold font, easy-to-read color coded speech balloons and repetition make this a perfect book for beginning readers. The limited vocabulary blended with the humorous situation will keep readers engrossed until the end.

"I Want My Hat Back," written and illustrated by Jon Klassen and published by Candlewick Press. After losing his hat, Bear politely and patiently questions his fellow forest dwellers as to the whereabouts of his "red pointy hat." Although no one admits to seeing the hat, deer helps Bear realize, "I HAVE SEEN MY HAT."

Klassen has created a droll tale told in deadpan dialogue. The digital and Chinese ink illustrations are spare yet endearing. The text is black, brown, green and red, reflecting who is speaking thus helping the beginning reader follow the narrative. Early readers are allowed to interpret rabbit's fate. This repetitive tale explores honesty and loss, a wry and witty offering that is truly unique. This is the first book Klassen has both written and illustrated.

"See Me Run," written and illustrated by Paul Meisel and published by Holiday House. Dogs and more dogs are everywhere. Running, sliding, jumping, splashing and having fun. Perceptive beginning readers will be drawn into the story starting with the illustration on the title page that hints at the surprising ending to come.

Paul Meisel has previously illustrated more than 70 books; "See Me Run" is the second book he has both written and illustrated. The simple text consists mostly of sight words familiar to the beginning reader. The pen and ink, acrylic ink, and colored pencil illustrations add to the uproarious mood and are essential for a complete understanding of the story.

Limited vocabulary, text in large font and short sentences help the reader have a successful experience. Even the blurb on the back cover uses vocabulary accessible for the emergent reader. The members of the 2012 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award Committee are: Chair Carole D. Fiore, Training and Library Consulting, Tallahassee, Fla.; Lauren Anduri, Oakland Public Library, Oakland, Calif., and Sequoia Elementary School, Oakland, Calif.; Connie Champlin, Cultural Adventures, Centerville, Mass.; Cheryl Lee, Palo Alto (Calif.) City Library; Jackie Partch, Multnomah County Library, Portland, Ore.; Mary Schreiber, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Parma, Ohio; and Maureen White, University of Houston — Clear Lake.

ALSC is the world's largest organization dedicated to the support and enhancement of library service to children. With a network of more than 4,000 children's and youth librarians, literature experts, publishers and educational faculty, ALSC is committed to creating a better future for children through libraries. To learn more about ALSC, visit their website at [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc).

For more information on the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award and other ALA Youth Media Awards, please visit [www.ala.org/yma](http://www.ala.org/yma).

Contact: Larra Clark  
ALA Media Relations  
312-280-5043  
[lclark@ala.org](mailto:lclark@ala.org)

For Immediate Release  
January 12, 2004

**ALSC announces new children's book award named  
for Theodor Seuss Geisel**

(CHICAGO) The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), is delighted to announce the creation of a new award for outstanding children's literature. Named for the world-renowned children's author, the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award joins ALSC's prestigious family of awards recognizing the most distinguished children's literature published each year.

The Theodor Seuss Geisel Award will be presented annually to both the author(s) and illustrator(s) of an outstanding book for beginning readers published in the past calendar year. The winning author[s] and illustrator[s] must demonstrate great creativity to engage children in reading. The first winner[s] of the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award will be announced during the ALA Midwinter Meeting in January 2006.

"There is a true magic to Geisel's work, which is clear in the enduring power of such classics as 'The Cat in the Hat' and 'Green Eggs and Ham,'" said ALSC President Gretchen Wronka. "This new award honors that spirit and the authors and illustrators that delight and engage children in reading."

"This is such a wonderful tribute to my husband," said Audrey Geisel, president of Dr. Seuss Enterprises. "Librarians are critical to instilling a love of reading in young people, and I'm so pleased the ALA and children's librarians will be selecting the best of the best in Dr. Seuss' name." Dr. Seuss would say, "A person's a person no matter how small. Children want the same things we want: to laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained and delighted." Brilliant, playful and always respectful of children, Dr. Seuss charmed his way into the consciousness of four generations of youngsters and parents. In the process, he helped them to read.

The award committee will hold its inaugural meeting at the 2005 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston, January 14-19. Caroline Ward, Ferguson Public Library (Conn.), will chair the committee, which also includes: Carole D. Fiore, State Library and Archives of Florida; Barbara Genco, Brooklyn Public Library (N.Y.); Nancy Green, Grand Canyon School (Ariz.); Leslie Holt, library consultant; Lynne Russo, National City Public Library (San Diego, Calif.); and Marilyn Sobotincic, Medina County District Library (Ohio).

ALSC is the world's largest organization dedicated to the support and enhancement of service to children in all types of libraries. ALSC sets the agenda for the future of children's library service and acts as a children's advocate urging policy makers to support library service for children.

## Past Geisel Winners & Honor Book Recipients

2015

Medal Winner

*You Are (Not) Small*, written by Anna Kang, illustrated by Christopher Weyant (Two Lions, New York)

Honor Books

*Mr. Putter & Tabby Turn the Page*, written by Cynthia Ryland, illustrated by Arthur Howard (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing)

*Waiting Is Not Easy!* written and illustrated by Mo Willems (Hyperion Books for Children, an imprint of Disney Book Group)

2014

Medal Winner

*The Watermelon Seed*, written and illustrated by Greg Pizzoli, is the Geisel Award winner. The book is published by Disney Hyperion Books, an imprint of Disney Book Group.

Honor Books

*Ball*, written and illustrated by Mary Sullivan and published by Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company

*A Big Guy Took My Ball!* written and illustrated by Mo Willems and published by Hyperion Books for Children, an imprint of Disney Book Group

*Penny and Her Marble*, written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes and published by Greenwillow Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

2013

Medal Winner

*Up, Tall and High!*, written and illustrated by Ethan Long is the Seuss Award winner. The book is published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group.

Honor Books

*Let's Go for a Drive!*, written and illustrated by Mo Willems, and published by Hyperion Books for Children, an imprint of Disney Book Group

*Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons* by Eric Litwin, created and illustrated by James Dean and published by HarperCollins Children's Books, a division of HarperCollins Publishers

*Rabbit & Robot: The Sleepover*, written and illustrated by Cece Bell and published by Candlewick Press.

2012

Medal winner

*Tales for Very Picky Eaters*, written and illustrated by Josh Schneider (Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company)

Honor Books

*I Broke My Trunk*, written and illustrated by Mo Willems (Hyperion Books for Children, an imprint of Disney Book Group)

*I Want My Hat Back*, written and illustrated by Jon Klassen (Candlewick Press)

*See Me Run*, written and illustrated by Paul Meisel (Holiday House)

2011

Medal winner

*Bink and Gollie*, written by Kate DiCamillo and Alison McGhee, illustrated by Tony Fucile (Candlewick Press)

Honor books

*Ling & Ting: Not Exactly the Same!*, written and illustrated by Grace Lin (Little, Brown and Company, a division of Hachette Book Group, Inc.)

*We Are in a Book!*, written and illustrated by Mo Willems (Hyperion Books for Children, an imprint of Disney Book Group)

2010

Medal winner

*Benny and Penny in the Big No-No!* by Geoffrey Hayes (Toon Books, a division of RAW Junior, LLC)

Honor books

*I Spy Fly Guy!* by Tedd Arnold, (Scholastic, Inc.)

*Little Mouse Gets Ready* by Jeff Smith (Toon Books, a division of RAW Junior, LLC)

*Mouse and Mole: Fine Feathered Friends* by Wong Herbert Yee (Houghton Mifflin Books for Children/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)

*Pearl and Wagner: One Funny Day*, written by Kate McMullan, illustrated by R.W. Alley (Dial Books for Young Readers)

2009

Medal winner

*Are You Ready to Play Outside?* by Mo Willems (Hyperion Books for Children, an imprint of Disney Book Group)

Honor books

*Chicken Said, 'Cluck!'* by Judyann Ackerman Grant, illustrated by Sue Truesdell (HarperCollins Children's Books, a division of HarperCollins Publishers)

*One Boy*, written and illustrated by Laura Vaccaro Seeger (A Neal Porter Book published by Roaring Brook Press, a division of Holtzbrinck Publishing Holdings Limited Partnership)

*Stinky*, written and illustrated by Eleanor Davis (RAW Junior/TOON Books)

*Wolfsnail: A Backyard Predator* by Sarah C. Campbell, photographs by Sarah C. Campbell and Richard P. Campbell (Boyd's Mills Press)

2008

Medal winner

*There Is a Bird on Your Head* by Mo Willems (Hyperion)

Honor books

*First the Egg* by Laura Vaccaro Seeger (Roaring Brook/Neal Porter)

*Hello, Bumblebee Bat*, written by Darrin Lunde, illustrated by Patricia J. Wynne (Charlesbridge)

*Jazz Baby*, written by Lisa Wheeler, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie (Harcourt)

*Vulture View*, written by April Pulley Sayre, illustrated by Steve Jenkins (Holt)

2007

Winner

*Zelda and Ivy: The Runaways*, by Laura McGee Kvasnosky. Candlewick.

Honor Books

*Mercy Watson Goes for a Ride*, written by Kate DiCamillo and illustrated by Chris Van Dusen. Candlewick;  
*Move Over, Rover!*, written by Karen Beaumont and illustrated by Jane Dyer. Harcourt;  
*Not a Box*, by Antoinette Portis. HarperCollins.

2006

Winner

*Henry and Mudge and the Great Grandpas*, by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Suçie Stevenson. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

Honor Books

*Hi! Fly Guy*, by Tedd Arnold. Cartwheel Books, an imprint of Scholastic Inc.;  
*A Splendid Friend, Indeed*, by Suzanne Bloom. Boyds Mills Press;  
*Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa* by Erica Silverman, illustrated by Betsy Lewin. Harcourt;  
*Amanda Pig and the Really Hot Day*, by Jean Van Leeuwen, illustrated by Ann Schweninger. Dial Books for Young Readers, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group.

## APPENDIX: EXPANDED DEFINITIONS & EXAMPLES

### I. PUBLICATION ELIGIBILITY ISSUES

#### **(A) SIMULTANEOUS**

SIMULTANEOUS - means "at the same time." For purposes of these awards, "published simultaneously" means that a book was first published in the United States within the same calendar year that it was first published in any other country, whether or not the actual dates of publication are identical.

Example:

*How I Live Now*, by Meg Rosoff, was published in 2004 by Wendy Lamb/Random House, and "simultaneously" published in Great Britain. It was explained by the editor, Wendy Lamb, that the book had been jointly acquired by the U.S. and British publishers; that editorial work had, from the beginning, been a joint process by the two editors; and that every effort had been made to be sure that the two editions were, literally, simultaneous. However, certain procedures specific to each publisher were impossible to manipulate (such as Tuesday always being publication day in the U.S. while the British publication day was always Thursday for these publishers). For this reason, the British edition was actually released a few days—but only a few days—before the U.S. edition. The book was ruled eligible with regard to date.

Note: This example does not address other issues, such as the age level of *How I Live Now*, nor the fact that Rosoff is a resident of the U.K. and it is unknown, at this writing, whether she has maintained her U.S. citizenship.

#### **(B) FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES**

FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES - means that the acquisition of the book and the editorial work were done by a publisher with editorial offices in the United States that publishes books under U.S. publishing conventions for a United States market. A book may be eligible if published "simultaneously" (see above) in another country, provided the acquisition and editorial work were done jointly or originated in the U.S.

Examples:

1. As in the example above, Rosoff's *How I Live Now* was considered eligible because the editorial work was done JOINTLY. Had the editorial work been done only by the British editor, the book would have been ineligible.
2. Numerous books have been declared ineligible because their publishers, although they have an "office" somewhere in the US, actually do the editorial work in another country. See below.

#### **(C) U.S PUBLISHER / AMERICAN PUBLISHER**

U.S. PUBLISHER and AMERICAN PUBLISHER - are used synonymously to mean a publisher with editorial offices in the United States. Publishers who maintain warehouse or distribution facilities in the U.S. but whose primary editorial offices are in other countries are specifically excluded.

### **(D) PUBLISHED**

PUBLISHED - means prepared and issued for public sale. This includes the acquisition, editorial work and release of a book and may (or may not) also include marketing and promotion.

Example:

*Eragon*, by Christopher Paolini, was originally self-published by Paolini International, Livingston, Montana, in 2002. Subsequently, in 2003, it was published by Random House. Because the first edition had been sold locally and distributed by the author, the Random House edition was ineligible.

The same would have been true had the original publication been by any smaller publisher, rather than by the author.

### **(E) PUBLICATION DATE**

As noted in definition #8 under “Definitions” in “Terms, Criteria, and Definitions,” books are eligible in either their year of publication or copyright, whichever is later.

Publication dates may initially be determined from the book itself; from the publisher’s Web site, or from such sources as the Library of Congress online catalog at <http://catalog.loc.gov> or Amazon at <http://www.amazon.com>.

Verification of publication dates, in cases where there is a question, should be done by the Chair or Priority Consultant, NOT individual committee members, with the assistance of ALSC staff if needed.

Examples:

A book with a copyright date of 2009, was actually put on sale and shipped by its publisher earlier than planned in late December 2008 due to year-end warehousing/inventory issues. It is eligible in 2009 for the 2010 awards.

Text and illustrations from *The Year of the Rat* by Grace Lin were copyrighted in 2007, but the title page of the book lists “First edition: January 2008.” It was eligible in 2008 for the 2009 awards.

### **(F) DISTRIBUTED**

DISTRIBUTED - means transmitted from the publisher to the wholesale or retail seller and may (or may not) also include marketing and promotion.

Example: Publishers Group West distributes the books of many small publishers (Children's Book Press, Lee and Low, Island Press and others).

### **(G) EDITORIAL WORK**

EDITORIAL WORK - means the negotiation process between author or illustrator and editor that leads from initial manuscript to finished book. It may include conversations, correspondence, written instructions, markings on drafts, or other communication about the book.

Example:

In the Rosoff example above, the editors worked with the author to shape the original manuscript, correct errors, etc. The two editors also held conversations with the author about the best choice of words to make the book equally readable in both countries.

Additional examples from one of the great editors of children's books may be found in the wonderful correspondence collected by Leonard Marcus in *Dear Genius: The Letters of Ursula Nordstrom* (HarperCollins, 1998).

### **(H) EDITORIAL OFFICE**

EDITORIAL OFFICE - means the place where "editorial work" is officially done. While it is recognized that many editors work at home, in transit, and in locations other than "offices," the location of the Editorial Office refers to the business address at which such work originates. Secondary or subsidiary offices are specifically excluded.

"Editorial work" (see above) specifically refers to the process of refining the manuscript from its original draft or proposal to its finished form. An office that acquires the original manuscript or distributes the completed book is not considered an "editorial office" unless the work of editing is also done there.

Example: Several Canadian publishers have maintained offices in the state of New York and elsewhere in the United States to facilitate their interactions with U.S. writers and illustrators while performing editorial work at their Canadian headquarters. These publishers, while they have U.S. offices, are not considered U.S. publishers for purposes of these awards.

### **(I) AMERICAN LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN**

AMERICAN LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN - means books published in the United States for children up to and including age 14. "American Literature," in this sense, refers to the origin of the book, and not to the time or location where the action takes place. Nor does it refer to the characters or actions within the book.

## **II. BOOK ELIGIBILITY ISSUES**

### **(A) ORIGINAL WORK**

The intent is to insure that a book is a NEW creation, and not a re-creation from some other work. This does not mean that some minor portion of the work cannot have appeared elsewhere. It does mean, however, that no significant part of the book under consideration was originally part of another work.

Not all cases are clear-cut, and each committee must make its own judgments about originality. Where consensus is not easily reached, the Chair should discuss the issue with the Priority Consultant, who may also consult the President, the Executive Director, the Board, or previous chairs.

1. Children's books derived from previously published adult books can't be considered eligible. The intent of the award is not to see who can successfully adapt an adult book; the award is intended for the original creation of a distinguished book for children. This condition is NOT intended to exclude works in which an author (or illustrator) has created a new work based on earlier work that is in the public

domain, such as a novel based on a Shakespeare play.

Examples:

*Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World* by Mark Kurlansky, was published for adults in 1998. A children's version, *The Cod's Tale*, was published in 2001 and would not be considered eligible.

*Othello: A Novel* by Julius Lester, based on the Shakespeare play and published for children in 1995, would be considered eligible.

2. If a portion of a book was previously published elsewhere - for instance, in a magazine, a collection of short stories or in electronic format - then the amount of previously published material must be a minor portion of the entire work. The substantial majority of the book must be wholly new, original and previously unpublished.

Example:

A chapter in *A Long Way from Chicago*, by Richard Peck (Newbery Honor, 1999) had previously been published as a short story. However, this chapter was a minor part of the book, which was much longer. The book was ruled eligible.

3. In the case of the Sibert Award, illustrations previously published or compiled from other sources may be used. In this case, however, the award would be presented only to the author and not to the artist or artists. Since informational books are frequently adapted from a variety of sources, the guiding principle should be whether the book, taken as a whole, is a substantially new and original contribution to the subject, rather than mainly an adaptation of a previous publication.

Example:

Susan Campbell Bartoletti's *Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow*, a 2006 Sibert Honor Book, is illustrated with photographs from many sources. Under these guidelines the author, but not the illustrations, would be eligible.

5. A book first published in electronic format (e-book) and subsequently published as a hardcover or paperback book is not eligible.

### **(B) IN ENGLISH**

IN ENGLISH - means that the committee considers only books written and published in English. This requirement DOES NOT limit the use of words or phrases in another language where appropriate in context. Bilingual books may be considered, with the understanding that the award is given for the English text. In such cases the committee should, if necessary, request that the non-English text be read by a native-speaker of that language to determine whether there are flaws that detract from the book's excellence or that would limit its acceptance by readers in the second language. Care must be taken, when approaching outside readers, not to imply the book is "under consideration" by the committee. This should be done ONLY by the chair, not individual committee members. Outside readers may be told only that the book is "eligible," and should be approached as early in the year as possible, to avoid the impression that the book appears on the discussion list. As stated in the terms and criteria, all eligible books are to be considered.

Examples:

The German author Cornelia Funke lived in California during the time she was writing one of the books in her Inkworld trilogy. Had the book been written in English, it might have been eligible for consideration based on her residency. However, because it was first written in German, it was not eligible.

*Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing* by James Rumford features Cherokee text alongside the English text. The book would be eligible, with the understanding that only the English text would be considered for the award, and with the suggestion the committee seek out the opinion of someone able to read Cherokee.

### **(C) CHILDREN'S BOOK**

CHILDREN'S BOOK - means a book for which children, up to and including age 14, are an intended and potential audience. Books for this entire age range are to be considered. ALSC awards (with the exception of the Geisel award for books for beginning readers) are given to "children," defined as "persons of ages up to and including fourteen."

Example:

*Frog and Toad Together*, by Arnold Lobel, was a Newbery Honor Book in 1973, despite the young age of its intended audience.

In some instances, award-winning books have been criticized for exceeding the upper age limit of fourteen.

If a book is challenging, and suitable for 13-14-year-olds but not for younger readers, is it eligible? Yes; but it can be given an award only if it does what it sets out to do as well as or better than other, younger books that are also eligible. Questions for committees to consider include these:

- \* Is there any 14-year-old for whom this book is suitable?
- \* If so, is it distinguished enough to be considered?
- \* If so, exactly what 14-year-olds would respond to it, and why?

A book may be considered even though it appeals to a fairly small part of the age range if the committee feels that

\* it is so distinguished that everyone of that age should know the book;

or

\* it is so distinguished, in so many ways, that it deserves recognition for the excellence it provides to a small but unique readership;

or

\* it is exceptionally fine for the narrow part of the range to which it appeals, even though it may be eligible for other awards outside this range.

### **(D) BOOK**

BOOK - means that the work was published in book format (pages between covers). Electronic books (e-books) and technological additions (including, but not limited to, CDs, DVDs, or accompanying websites)

are specifically excluded from consideration of the book itself. A book published only in electronic format (e-book) is not eligible.

Example:

A picture-book version of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* with accompanying CD of a New York Philharmonic performance of the work may be considered, but ONLY the book itself is considered for the award. If the book should win, the citation should point out that although a CD is included with the book, the committee considered, and the award is given to, the book only (or, in this case, the illustrator).

### **III. AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR ELIGIBILITY ISSUES**

#### **(A) RESIDENT**

RESIDENT - means 1) that the author or illustrator has established and maintains residence in the United States, U.S. territory, or U.S. commonwealth, as distinct from being a casual or occasional visitor.

Or 2) that the author/illustrator meets one of the following criteria:

a) The author/illustrator, a citizen of another country, holds a "green card" and is a Permanent Resident Alien.

b) The author/illustrator lives for at least 6 months EVERY year in the United States, regardless of where the book was actually written.

c) A resident is also an individual whose permanent home is in the US but who is outside of the US for a temporary purpose. For example, an individual goes on vacation in another country or works there temporarily. The individual still maintains residency in the US and intends to return.

Examples:

A Polish author who had obtained a "green card" and had lived in Brooklyn, NY, for many years decided, when her home was being renovated, to spend a year in Poland with relatives before returning to Brooklyn. She was considered eligible during this period, even though she was temporarily living abroad, because she had established Permanent Resident status.

The British author Susan Cooper lived for many years in the Boston area, though she traveled widely and returned to Britain at times. She was considered eligible.

#### **(B) CITIZEN**

CITIZEN - means that the author/illustrator is considered by the government of the United States to be a U.S. Citizen, whether by birth or naturalization. This definition shall apply even if the author or illustrator obtains citizenship during the year in which a book is being considered.