PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

FOR THE

AMELIA ELIZABETH WALDEN AWARD

Sponsored by the
Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of the NCTE
(ALAN)

REVISED MARCH 2019 (EDI STATEMENT ADDED JUNE 2023)
CONTEXT AND CRITERIA

Established in 2008 to honor the wishes of Amelia Elizabeth Walden, the award allows for a cash award to be presented annually to the author of a book selected by the ALAN Amelia Elizabeth Walden Award (AEWA) Committee as “the title of the year most relevant to adolescents and having enjoyed a wide and appreciative teenage audience.”

Per Walden’s request, the selected title must:
1) be a work of fiction, ideally a novel (novels that are part of a series must be able to stand alone);
2) be published within one year prior to the call for titles;
3) be published in the United States but may have been published elsewhere prior; and
3) possess a positive approach to life, widespread teen appeal, and literary merit (please see below for additional guidance).

A Positive Approach to Life
Submitted titles should:
• treat teen readers as capable and thoughtful young people
• offer hope and optimism, even when describing difficult circumstances
• have a credible and appropriate resolution
• portray characters involved in shaping their lives in a positive way, even as they struggle with the harsh realities of life

Widespread Teen Appeal
Submitted titles should:
• be intended expressly for readers aged 12-18
• have universal themes that transcend time and place
• have themes that resonate with a wide variety of readers, regardless of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation
• provide readers with a window to the world and/or reflect their own experiences

Literary Merit
Submitted titles should:
• contain well-developed characters
• employ well-constructed forms suitable to function
• include language and literary devices that enhance the narrative
• suggest cogent and richly-realized themes
• present an authentic voice
PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

I. APPOINTMENT AND DUTIES OF AEWA COMMITTEE CHAIR

A. Each year, by the end of April, the current and incoming ALAN Presidents and current AEWA Committee Chair will appoint a new AEWA Committee Chair from those on the selection committee who served the year prior.

1. Committee members wishing to apply for the position of chair will be asked to submit a statement indicating her/his interest in the position, explaining why s/he would like to be the chair, describing her/his qualifications, and outlining plans and goals s/he might have for the committee by April 22nd.

B. The AEWA Committee Chair will:

1. Work in conjunction with the current and incoming ALAN Presidents to appoint a chair and select new committee members.

2. Facilitate communication between the committee and the ALAN Executive Council and Board of Directors

3. Contact publishers to: announce the call for nominations: invite the submission of titles for consideration: solicit committee-nominated titles: notify them of selection of the Finalists and Winner: and make arrangements for the Finalists and Winner to attend the AEWA reception.

4. Maintain communication with committee members.

5. Create Round One committee subgroups; distribute nominated titles; and set voting deadlines.

6. Not participate as a voting member of the committee during Round One.

7. Participate as a voting member of the committee during Rounds Two and Three.

8. Work with the ALAN President, Treasurer and Executive Secretary to facilitate the planning of the AEWA reception which will take place during the ALAN Workshop in November. This includes, but is not limited to: organizing the reception, ordering the award trophy, and making arrangements for the presentation of the award money.


10. Work with the incoming and outgoing ALAN presidents to select a Committee Chair for the next year’s committee.
11. Remain on the committee for an additional year in order to serve as an advisor to the incoming chair.

C. The outgoing Committee Chair will remain on the committee in an advisory role. The past-chair will serve a one (1) year term and will help to facilitate contact with publishers, keep records, and otherwise act as mentor to the new Committee Chair. The past-chair will continue to receive books and participate in discussions, but will not be a voting member of the committee. If it becomes necessary for a committee member to be replaced, the past-chair may step in as a voting member of the committee.

1. In the event that the outgoing chair is unavailable to remain on the committee, the incoming Committee Chair (with the recommendation of the ALAN president) will appoint a member from the previous year’s selection committee.

II. SELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

A. Those interested in serving on the selection committee will self-nominate by completing an online form posted on the ALAN website. Applications will be due by May 15th with the committee chosen by May 22nd.

B. Members of the selection committee must be ALAN members AND classroom teachers, librarians, or university faculty members. To avoid potential conflicts of interest, authors and publishers are not eligible to apply. Applicants will be asked to submit a statement outlining their professional experience (including, but not limited to, previous experience on juried committees, experience as a book reviewer, experience analyzing and evaluating books, etc.) and describing why they’d like to be part of the committee. Applicants will also be required to submit two references.

C. The AEWA Committee Chair, AEWA past chair, current ALAN President, and incoming ALAN President, striving for wide representation of members in terms of professional position, grade level of population served, and geographic diversity, will extend an invitation to selected applicants, maintaining the following distribution of committee members:

1. Three (3) classroom teachers (defined as full-time teachers in a classroom at the middle or high school level)

2. Three (3) librarians (defined as school librarians in middle and high school and/or public librarians who work with teens/YAs)

3. Three (3) university faculty members (defined as tenured or tenure-track faculty who work in the field of YA literature)

4. One (1) Committee Chair.
III. TERMS AND DUTIES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

A. Those selected will serve for two (2) years with the possibility of reappointment for a third (to be determined by the Committee Chair and recommendation of the current and incoming ALAN presidents) in order to maintain the desired rotation of replacing 1/3 of the committee per year. Terms will be staggered to ensure historical memory.

B. Committee Members are expected to:

1. Read all assigned books.
   a) Listening to an audio book is not considered acceptable at any point in the process.

2. Meet voting deadlines in a timely manner (Round 1 June-December, Round 2 January-February, Finalists chosen by March 30th, Winner chosen by April 15th.)

3. Acknowledge receipt (or lack thereof) of submitted titles.

4. Maintain communication with the Committee Chair.

5. Actively participate in online group discussion.

6. Attend ALAN and participate in the AWEA panel.

C. A committee member who repeatedly fails to meet the above expectations may be asked to step down from the committee. The decision to remove a committee member mid-year will be considered a last resort and will only be pursued if other measures have proven unsuccessful at correcting the problem(s). The Committee Chair will document violations and will communicate said violations to both the committee member and the current ALAN president. Prior to removal from the committee, a written warning will be sent to the committee member in question and cc’ed to the ALAN president.

D. In the event that a committee member should need to step down, either due to a lack of involvement in committee activities or due to events of a personal nature, the Committee Chair (with the recommendation of the current ALAN president) may either:

1. Choose to appoint a new member to finish out that year’s committee work. The replacement member may be drawn from the pool of that year’s original applicants OR may be a former AEWA committee member (including the past-chair). At the end of that year, the Committee Chair (with the approval of the ALAN president) will have the option to: terminate the replacement member’s tenure on the committee; reappoint the replacement member for the remainder of the original member’s 2 year term; or allow the replacement member to begin a 2 year term of her/his own.
2. Choose to finish that year’s committee deliberations without appointing a new member. If this is the case, then there must be a minimum margin of 2 votes between the yes and no votes in order for a book to move forward in Rounds 2 and 3.

E. Policy for Social Media for AEWA Committee:

1. The members of the AEWA Committee must refrain from posting anything about the award committee’s submissions, deliberations, and discussions during their tenure on the committee. Committee members may not post about submitted titles for consideration unless such posts are done without reference to the book being part of those considered for the award processes.

   a) Failure to comply with this policy will result in immediate removal from the AEWA Committee. Please consult with the AEWA Chair and/or the Executive Director of ALAN should there be any question.

F. Policy for Need for Confidentiality:

1. Members of the AEWA Committee may not share any part of the discussions about submitted books with anyone outside of the committee. All proceedings of the committee must remain confidential.

G. Policy for Conflict of Interest for AEWA Committee:

1. If any member of the committee is mentioned in the acknowledgements for a book submitted for AEWA consideration or has written a guide or done other work for a particular book, they MUST recuse themselves from deliberations for that (those) particular book(s).

2. If any other conflict of interest is found (working with the author, etc.), the committee member MUST recuse themselves from deliberations for that (those) particular book(s).

3. In the case of a recusal in round 2 or 3, the past chair will vote in place of that committee member.

IV. ALAN’s Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

A. ALAN’s Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion applies to the AEWA committee, its criteria, its processes, and its procedures:

   1. It is the policy of the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and its Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE (ALAN) to embrace human diversity and demonstrate sensitivity to the concerns of people historically underrepresented or
marginalized. This includes all underrepresented groups reflecting the range of human differences, among which are race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical challenges, and religion. This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list, only a list of examples.

Among our aims are to include a diverse range of participants (1) on appointed commissions, boards, committees, task forces, and other official groups; (2) among the leadership of the above groups; and (3) among the nominees presented by each nominating committee. In addition, in NCTE conventions and workshop sessions we will include substantial programs dealing with interests of a diverse range of participants, and engage leaders and/or consultants who are practicing teachers, librarians, youth program directors, etc., representing levels of instruction involved who reflect the group whose concerns around which a program revolves. In addition, ALAN will attempt to ensure that all facilities for participants at events have physical and sensory accessibility with the help of NCTE and the convention venue.

We also resolve to include people representing all groups in verbal and visual materials intended to represent or describe ALAN. In 2018 ALAN established an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee (EDI), and a position on the ALAN Board of Directors for the EDI Committee Chair. The purpose of this officer and advisory committee includes recommendations for policy creation and for concrete actions for implementation. The EDI Committee will provide an annual report of advisements, recommendations and accomplishments to the ALAN Board of Directors at each annual board meeting in November, the contents of which will be passed on to the NCTE.

V. Timeline for the Review and Selection of the Winning Title and Finalists

A. Gathering of Titles:

1. The Committee Chair contacts publishers to announce the call for nominations by June 1st and invite the submission of titles for consideration (Winter catalog from the year before and the Spring and Summer catalog of the current year).

2. Additionally, committee members recommend titles they believe to be worthy of consideration. If not already sent, the Committee Chair solicits these titles from publishers.

3. All submitted titles are due from publishers by October 31 of each year. All titles are sent by publishers to all committee members.

B. Round One Reading and Review:
1. The Committee Chair divides the nominated titles among three committee subgroups containing one (1) classroom teacher, one (1) librarian, and one (1) university faculty member. These groups remain intact throughout the first round of reading.

2. If after 50 pages it is clear that a book fails to meet at least two of the three award criteria, then there is no need to read it from start to finish.

3. At periodic dates set by the Committee Chair, individual committee members send yes/no votes to the Committee Chair to determine which subgroup titles will be recommended for review by the full committee.

   a) Meeting the deadlines set forth by the Committee Chair is a part of the duties of a committee member.

4. Those titles receiving a unanimous vote within each subgroup are either maintained or eliminated. For those titles receiving a split vote, the Committee Chair solicits two additional readers from other subgroups to read each title and vote. Any book receiving three (3) yes votes will advance to the next round.

5. The Committee Chair does not vote in this round.

6. All titles should be evaluated by **December 30** of each year, resulting in the creation of a list of Round Two titles.

C. Round Two Reading and Selection of Finalists:

1. All committee members read all titles recommended for full committee review.

2. With a close eye toward the award criteria, individual committee members share their thoughts regarding each title by participating in a closed online discussion forum (to be established by the Committee Chair).

   a) Round two discussions should be directly connected to the award criteria. Inappropriate, off topic, preferential, or other non-award comments should be refrained from.

   b) Committee members are required to comment on the discussions for all Round 2 books. Not doing so is against the duties set forth for committee members

3. By **February 28** of each year, all committee members (including the Committee Chair) vote to determine whether each Round Two title should remain in contention.

4. Titles receiving six (6) or more votes remain; all others are eliminated.
5. This process of discussion/voting continues until an appropriate number of Finalists (generally 3-5) remains. Finalists will be announced by **March 30th**.

6. The Committee Chair contacts the publishers of the Finalists to encourage advanced planning for travel to the ALAN Workshop the following fall. Press releases indicating the Finalists are distributed. Should scheduling allow, the committee might also consider facilitating telephone call notifications to the Finalists.

D. Round Three Reading and Selection of the Winning Title:

1. Committee members reread the remaining titles (deemed Finalists) and continue their online discussions.
   a) Round three discussions should be directly connected to the award criteria. Inappropriate, off topic, preferential, or other non-award comments should be refrained from.
   b) Committee members are required to comment on the discussions for all Round three books. Not doing so is against the duties set forth for committee members.

2. All committee members will vote to determine the winning title.

3. If no book receives the minimum six (6) votes during the first vote, then the discussion and voting process continues until one title receives six (6) or more votes out of ten (10) and is named the winner.
   a) Titles may be eliminated as necessary during this part of the process. For example, if a clear “top two” emerge, then the other titles may be eliminated from future votes.

4. The Winning Title should be selected by **April 1** of each year.

5. Final selection of the Winning Title and Finalists is shared with the ALAN Executive Council by **April 15** of each year.

6. Press releases indicating the Winner are distributed.

E. Follow-up:

1. Committee members work with the ALAN President and publishers of the Finalists to plan for the AEWA Panel to be held during the ALAN Workshop in November.