

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting**  
**ALA Midwinter Meeting, Philadelphia**  
**January 11-16, 2008**

**Topic:** Request for Board Action: Odyssey Committee Changes

**Background:** The inaugural Odyssey Committee chair is requesting the following changes to the committee's policies and procedures.

**Action Required:** Action

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**Request:**

To: ALSC Board

From: Mary Burkey, Chair Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production

Re: Request for Board action at Mid-winter 2008

Request for changes in the Odyssey Award Eligibility & Criteria language as posted on the ALA website:

[www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawds/odysseyaward/odysseyawardeligibilitycriteria/odysseycriteria.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawds/odysseyaward/odysseyawardeligibilitycriteria/odysseycriteria.htm)

The posted language currently serves as the guide for the committee, as the Manual has not yet been written. Three points of revision have been determined in the course of the award's first year. Extensive email conversations between the Chair, comm

**Additional Information:**

**Approved Award Proposal:**

**The ALSC/Booklist/YALSA Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production**

**Background Information**

**What**

An award for the best audiobook produced for children and/or young adults during the preceding year.

**Who**

A committee made up of the following persons developed the rationale and requirements for this award:

**Producers:** Bruce Coville, Full Cast Audio; Tim Ditlow, Listening Library/Random House; Arnie Cardillo, Live Oak Media

**Booklist Staff:** Bill Ott, Editor & Publishers; Sue-Ellen Beauregard, Media Editor

**ALSC Members:** Mary Burkey, Chair Notable Children's Recordings; Ellen Fader, ALSC President

**YALSA Members:** Sharon Grover, Incoming Chair of Selected Audiobooks for Young Adults; Chair Pam Spencer Holley, YALSA President

**Name Selection for Award**

The story of the wanderings of Ulysses, as he returns to his kingdom of Ithaca after the Trojan War, are ascribed to the blind poet Homer who either wrote, or dictated, the epic poem called *The Odyssey*. Whether this odyssey of Ulysses was based on one specific event, or many different ones, is argued by researchers today, though they all seem to agree that the poems comprising *The Odyssey* were originally told and retold in the oral tradition, hence the name for this award. The Odyssey Award allows us to return to the ancient roots of storytelling, while living in our modern world.

**Why**

The youth divisions honor books and movies with awards, such as the Caldecott, Carnegie, Newbery and Printz, but there is no official ALA award for audiobooks, which constitute a fast growing areas of usage in libraries. Consider the following:

- Circulation for children's audiobooks rose 10.7 percent and the budget for these materials rose 4.8 percent (Audio Publisher Association, December 2004)
- The growth in circulation of audiobooks is outpacing overall library circulation. Book clubs are increasingly made up of hybrid listener-readers, and the market for children's

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As a group of professionals who are committed to lifelong literacy, it's important that we recognize the role of audiobooks in the development of literacy. Consider the following:

- Research shows that one of the most important reasons for the increasing interest in audiobooks for young people are the correlations between listening to audiobooks and improvements in reading comprehension, fluency, language acquisition, vocabulary development and improved achievement. (“Not Just for Listening,” *Book Links*



	qualities of the work.
Annual Conference:	The committee meets in three closed sessions to discuss all titles suggested up to May deadline.
June - October:	Committee members continue to listen and each month, at an agreed upon time, suggest titles for award consideration. The chair will compile and distribute to committee members, monthly cumulative master lists of titles suggested since Annual. Committee members will listen to all suggested titles in their entirety and maintain careful evaluative notes of the meritorious qualities of the work.
October:	<b>October 1:</b> Final date for producers to submit audiobooks for consideration. <b>October deadline:</b> From the list of suggested titles, committee members nominate up to three titles for the voting ballot; members write annotations for each title. Chair compiles list of all nominated titles and sends list to members. <b>October deadline –December deadline:</b> Committee members continue to listen and suggest titles for award consideration. The chair will compile and distribute master lists of newly suggested titles to committee members. Committee members will listen to all suggested titles in their entirety and maintain careful evaluative notes of the meritorious qualities of the work.
December - Jan:	<b>December deadline:</b> Committee members nominate three additional, and different, titles, with annotations, for the voting ballot. Chair compiles and sends a final annotated list of all nominated titles to members. Committee members will evaluate all nominated titles noting the qualities that match the award criteria.
Midwinter Conference	Committee meets in three closed sessions to select a winner and honor titles (if any) from the list of nominated titles. Winning titles are announced at the Youth Media Awards Press Conference.

## Eligibility

The ALSC/Booklist/YALSA Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production shall be awarded annually to the best audiobook produced for children and/or young adults during the preceding year.

- All literary genres are eligible for consideration, including read-alongs.
- Audiobooks produced previously in another audio format are ineligible for consideration.
- The audiobook must have been designated by its publisher as intended for either young adults or children, who are defined as persons up to and including eighteen; works for this entire age range are to be considered.

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- Audiobooks featuring single or full cast narration are eligible

§ Is the performance dynamic and does it reflect the expressive nature of the text?

Ø **Sound Quality**

§ Is the sound sharp and clear with no obvious humming, distortion, or electronic interference?

§ Does the sound quality remain consistent throughout the recording?

Ø **Background Music and Sound Effects**

§ If music and sound effects are used, do they enhance the text and support the vocal performance?

§ Does the music represent the emotional and structural content of the text?

<sup>3</sup> **Overall Rating**

**The sum of all the criteria should represent the highest achievement in audiobooks for children and/or young adults, including**

- excellence in narration;
- excellence of audio interpretation of story, theme, or concept;
- excellence of execution in the aural techniques of the medium, with adaptations of materials remaining true to, expanding, or complementing the work;
- excellence in the delineation through the audio medium of literary elements including plot, theme, characters, mood, setting, or information presented;
- excellence in the appropriateness of technique or treatment to the story, theme, or concept.

## **Confidentiality**

As all nominated titles must be kept confidential, there will be no announcements of nominated titles. All committee meetings and discussions, including electronic discussions, are closed to YALSA and ALSC membership and the general public.

## **Nominations**

Committee members suggest audiobook titles beginning in March, with suggestions due each month from March through the end of the time period. Three nominations from each committee member are due, at agreed-upon deadlines, in October and three different nominations in December. Following this procedure allows committee members to reflect on what their peers consider to be award-worthy titles and narrows the list, leading to more efficient and productive meetings.

Each suggestion must be in writing on an official suggestion form [available from either the ALSC [ALSC@ala.org] or the YALSA Office [YALSA@ala.org] or online from either division's

website [[www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc) or [www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa)]. Each suggestion must include the following information: author, title, publisher, name of narrator/full cast info, price, ISBN, time of production, length, format and an annotation specifying those qualities that justify the title for consideration.

At the agreed-upon deadlines in October, and again in December, committee members submit three nominations each to the chair. Each committee sets these specific deadlines at its first midwinter meeting to accommodate the oddities of that year's calendar, the actual conference dates, and any conflicts that the chair may have that would prevent the compilation of suggestions and/or nominations.

## **Field Suggestions**

Field suggestions are encouraged. To be eligible, they must be submitted on the official suggestion form. Committee members will be notified of all field suggestions, which are eligible to be considered for nomination by members. Only those titles that have been nominated will be discussed at Midwinter and





