

June 1, 1979

Dear Zena:

I do hope that this makes sense, but in the interest of your request for speed and my own limited amount of time (leave next Saturday for 2 weeks of travel prior to ALA so you can imagine the amount of work that has to be wrapped up between CBRs and BPL) sitting at the typewriter and writing off the top of my head. Should there be points that need clarification, I will be at the Ramada Inn in Dallas so give me a call to arrange a get together.

Perhaps I'm being the fly in the ointment, but I find myself asking some questions about the facts that were discussed about the N/C banquet in Washington D.C. and thus some of the statistics. When Mary Jane reported that a large number of banquet tickets were sold to non-ALSC members, does this include publishers? If so, is it taken into account that approximately 50-75% of the table is made up of J librarians and therefore probably ALSC members. It has been years since I personally brought a ticket so I probably don't show up as being at the banquet. Think the question about younger members affording needs to be examined too. Can they afford ALA conference at all? Also, remember the Scribner Award was given to only 2 people this year. Several years ago when I chaired the Scribner I had approximately 100 applications---the second year about 20. Since then it has taken additional nosedives. Being realistic about J librarians you must realize we are usually low-person on the totem no matter where we are, both economically and in terms of rights to go to ALA. Another consideration is that the JMRT social has been in competition in recent years.

Frankly I don't see the problem about the ALSC membership & office spending extensive time on the banquet. It rotates to various cities so the core changes yearly. When it was pointed out that the ALSC office spends more time on the banquet than the committee, I immediately wondered if that meant the committee was being short changed. Trying to recall my time on the NC couldn't think of how better the office could have served us. Maybe that impression based on my gut feeling that freeing them will not improve matters. ALSC already does a lot of projects related to services to children. My guess is that the local people who work on the banquet do it in addition to their other activities---not in place of.

To go back to those who attend the banquet. Know it is the one J thing that some directors and the like attend. Will they attend if just another ALSC program---doubt it. The NC dinner is one of the last traditions that live on in ALA. I'm not alone in looking forward to dressing up for the gala occasion---and I've heard the same from J & non-J people. What are the attendance figures like---have they dropped? If remaining constant or growing, isn't that a vote of confidence. How many go to the NC for the speeches? You can always read later. Have there been complaints about not being able to see or hear the speeches? Have people been barred from coming in for the speeches alone? Perhaps we should try having the banquet and then reassemble in an adjoining room for the speeches. I am all for trying new things, but is the elimination of the banquet being suggested just to try something new---not for any sound reasons. The really super improvement in recent years has been the open reception after the dinner. Have heard a lot of favorable comments about being able to see real authors/illustrators, even if not on publisher lists.

*Out of room. Hope this helps. See you in Dallas.  
Ann Kalkhoff*