

THOMAS Y. CROWELL, PUBLISHERS

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Dear Zena,

I hope I'm not too late to comment on the Newbery/Caldecott Awards.

I have thought a great deal about alternatives to the N/C dinner and I can only recommend that it be continued with some economies of effort and of time in such things as the local arrangements committee -- doing away with decorated tables, favors, and the like. These things have usually been done with expertise and professionalism but they are unnecessary and they seem to lend a women's club atmosphere to the dinner which I have always found amateurish despite the quality of the decorations. In short -- they are not really necessary on the part of ALSC. The banquet itself can be handled by the hotel, leaving only the speaker's table to be dealt with.

In the last year it seemed to me that the N/C presentation, both in January and in June, was handled with thought, and dignity. There were shorter meetings, shorter dinners, or parties, or whatever, so that they tended to be pleasant for all concerned instead of endless, as in some of the past years.

The reason for my conclusion that the dinner should stay, with economies of time and effort on the part of the executive secretary and as stated above, is this: I firmly believe that unless these awards are surrounded with pomp and circumstance the crowds will dwindle and within five years the attitude will be, "Oh well, I can read the acceptance in _____ magazine and meet the author in the exhibit area." This may be unfortunate and unprofessional, but I believe it to be a strong possibility. Whether we like it or whether we don't, the N/C ceremonies bring the kind of publicity needed for children's books. I'm sure I don't need to elaborate concerning this need.

While I am recommending that we retain the June ceremonial dinner, I certainly am open to the shortening of the news conference at Midwinter and the return to an announcement of the winners, precluding the transportation of winners and honor book recipients to two different meetings, frequently at enormous cost.

Zena, you may recall that I go back to the days when Bowker was very active in the presentation of the awards, and the announcements were very simple even if the author happened to be in the neighborhood. I still remember standing with Elizabeth Riley and Barbara Cooney in the Bowker offices when Dan Melcher made the announcement. Of course the N/C dinner followed as usual in June with its attendant celebrations. Year by year the press conference got bigger and bigger and became a ceremony preceding the dinner, etc., etc. Anyway, I seem to be verbose, so may I put on a separate piece of paper my clearcut recommendations?

With best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be 'Pat', written in dark ink.

PA:mp
Enclosure