

COLLIER

MOUNTAINSIDE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MOUNTAINSIDE, N. J. 07092

Media Center

WILLIAM F. HUMMEL, PRINCIPAL
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WOODACRES DRIVE
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June 12, 1979

Zena B. Sutherland
1418 E. 57 St.
Chicago, IL 60637

Dear Zena:

From only slightly deeper than the top of my head, here are my reactions to the N/C banquet question. The banquet has been a high point of every ALA conference I've attended because of the feeling of festivity that goes with the occasion, the people with whom I've shared the evening (Maybe I've been lucky in table assignments!), and the speeches which are always so revealing of the award winners themselves. How much of that festive feeling is because the evening is a "meal event" (even though the food is often mediocre and certainly costly) I'm not psychologist enough to assess. Judging by the size of the crowd each year, it appears that the established combination of dinner and speakers is a winning one, successful despite the cost. To me, it's great that the event draws lots of people, ALSC and non-ALSC, because I feel we are not only honoring the award winners and giving ALSC members a pleasant evening topped off with speeches of professional interest, but are celebrating (promoting?) children's literature for the wider audience. Though a service is being provided to non-members, ALSC goals are also being served so I think it is legitimate for the office to spend time on the event. Perhaps I'd change my mind if I saw data on who the non-ALSC attendees are, the potential number of ALSC attendees vs the actual number, and the total amount of time that goes into making the arrangements. Isn't the problem that the present function seems pretty successful, at least on the surface, so unless there are concrete, easily established, recognizable reasons for doing so, a break with tradition is hard to justify? We'd be looking for an alternative program pretty fast if banquet costs got so high everybody stopped buying tickets....then there would be no question of the need to change the format. I guess what all this agonizing comes down to is that I'd be ready to try an awards presentation program if there really is a large potential audience for it (ALSC and non-ALSC). However, I think the reason for exchanging the successful awards banquet for the alternative program has got to be the expectation that more people will attend....I'll bet that the costs in clerical and volunteer time won't be greatly different either way.

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I hope you've received your assignment for the Notables discussion program by now. Our problem was that a large number of people waited until the last minute to register, and Anitra couldn't assign tables and leaders until she knew what was needed.

See you in Dallas,



Susan Collier

SDCjc

P.S. I meant to add that I think the argument about the amount of time spent on the work of the N/C committee by the ALSC office being less than the amount spent on arrangements for the banquet is an interesting fact but extraneous to this question: banquet or other event.