

# DUTTON

May 18, 1979

Mrs. Zena Sutherland  
The University of Chicago  
Center for Children's Books  
5835 Kimbark Avenue  
Chicago, Ill. 60637

Dear Zena:

In response to Sue's letter about suggestions for possible alternatives to the Newbery-Caldecott Dinner, I'd like to say that, as a publisher, the dinner itself seems the kind of institution that should not be done away with. I think just because it is a tradition, it has become a focal point of the convention--and adds a sorely needed bit of festive trappings as well as a spirit of celebration.

In fact, as you will see from the enclosed copy of a letter to Lillian Gerhardt, I think the dinner needs to be even more festive in spirit. From my point of view, the need for change falls rather in the procedures of the selection committees after the awards are decided.

It may be heresy to say this, but it is just possible that the fact that everyone cannot attend the dinner makes it even more attractive! As you may recall, when Blair Lent won the Caldecott, we decided to be egalitarian in our approach at the convention and have literally an open house rather than a "by invitation" party. I still shudder at the memory, since virtually no one came! And a number of librarians did come up to me or Mimi and say that they knew the reason for the poor attendance was because there were no invitations. Exclusivity is desirable, it would seem; such is human nature.

I hope this is the kind of response you need? Let me know if anything else is required!

Best,



Ann Durell  
Vice President  
Children's Books

AD/hs  
Enc.

CC: Suzanne M. Glazer

E.P. Dutton  
Publishers Since 1852

February 26, 1979

Lillian N. Gerhardt  
School Library Journal  
1180 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, N.Y. 10036

Dear Lillian:

I've been giving some thought to your first "President's message" in Top of the News and what you said about the need for re-evaluation of the post-selection procedure for Newbery and Caldecott. Having been closely involved with that procedure in January, I found that I had some ideas about how it could be improved.

This is what I think should happen.

1. As soon as they have completed the selection of winners and honor books, the two committees should meet together while the two chairs call the various publishers, and obtain the authors' and artists' phone numbers. The chairs should then call the authors and artists.
2. As soon as all winners have been notified, the list should be posted in a public place.
3. Nothing more should take place at Mid-winter. Instead, all A.L.A. efforts should be bent to getting national publicity for the awards, especially the appearance of the two winners on the "Today" show. I would assume most publishers would be happy to underwrite a trip to New York for that rather than a trip to the Mid-winter meeting.
4. All celebrations in connection with the award should take place at the summer meeting. Which has become something of an anti-climax, I think.

I think that what now happens at the Mid-winter meeting no longer serves a purpose. The fact is that the secret is out within hours of the committee's decision, and there is no need for midnight meetings in chairperson's rooms and so on. The so-called press conference serves little or no publicity function and since most people at the meeting already know who the winners are, lacks any dramatic function

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The summer meeting festivities, on the other hand, <sup>could</sup> benefit from new spirit, and concentrating the celebrations there could serve that very positive purpose.

And, speaking of spirit, please accept this letter in the one in which it is meant--not ungrateful carping, but a wish to help everyone concerned do the best by a much valued honor!

Sincerely,

Ann Durell  
Vice President  
Children's Books

AD/hs

CC: Mimi Kayden