



May 16, 1979

Ms. Zena B. Sutherland
1418 East 57th Street
Chicago, IL 60637

Dear Zena:

I like the Newbery/Caldecott banquet. However, if the plan which we now have is one which does keep some of our younger members from attending, then perhaps we ought to give thought to it. However, I believe that we are not working from a full information base at this point and I would suggest some things that we need to find out before we give up an affair which is appealing to somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000 people each year. The questions which we need to seek answers to are the following:

1. Has anyone ever been turned away from the banquet?
2. Is it true that our younger members cannot afford to buy tickets? I think a more basic question here is related to whether our younger members can afford to come to the conference. Anyone who can afford to travel anywhere from 100-2,000 miles and pay for hotel rooms probably does not find an additional \$18.00 - \$20.00 for a banquet ticket an unreasonable additional expense.
3. If our younger members cannot afford to buy tickets, can we set up some arrangement in which a number of younger members would be given tickets once for banquet attendance?
4. How many ALSC members attending the conference do not attend the Newbery/Caldecott Banquet? If they do not, is it because they do not wish to or is it because of the cost? This is a question which cannot be addressed to the membership which does not attend the conference. It must be addressed to those who have or will attend the conference, and I believe the information can be obtained.
5. Is there a more efficient way to run the banquet? That is, cannot more of the local arrangements be left to the local committee?
6. Would people attend if there were a lecture or something of that kind? I believe we might explore this among our own members as well as the non ALSC members which attend the banquet. My feeling is that there are a core of people who would come to the acceptance ceremony no matter what its format. However, there are others who come because of the festiveness of the

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occasion and there may be a public relations bonus for ALSC and for children's books stemming from this festivity.

7. The Newbery/Caldecott Banquet does operate on a profit margin. I believe this margin is set by ALA policy. It is set in order to assure no debt for such affairs. However, this banquet always draws heavily. If the profit margin is more than we believe necessary, I think it is entirely possible that we could petition the Executive Board of ALA to lower the profit margin and therefore lower the banquet cost. There is another aspect to consider also. That aspect is that there are services which ALSC is able to provide because of the profit made from the banquet. One example of this is the fact that at least part of the work of the Media Evaluation Committee was supported from the banquet profits in the past. I believe it is also appropriate to question whether the head table guests, other than the winners, ought to be guests at this dinner. This is the only professional organization to which I belong at which head table guests who are members of the organization have their meal paid for by the organization. A head table of around twenty people at \$20.00 each comes to a cost of \$400.00. I believe that cost could be reasonably lowered to the cost of the dinners for the winners, perhaps the publishers (I'm not so sure about whether they ought to be guests) and the winners of the honor books. It may be necessary to include one or two other political dignitaries as guests. However, the officers of ALSC, the chair of the committee, and the officers of ALA need not be guests in my opinion. Further, the cost of the reception for the head table preceding the dinner could certainly be kept down. This may be a more elaborate affair than is necessary. It does add to the festivity for the winners and I am concerned about that. However, I do not believe that the sense of festivity would be lessened if refreshments were less elaborate.

In other words, what I am suggesting is that there is a lot of information which the ALSC Board needs to have prior to making a final decision on this matter. For that reason, I do not feel that we are at a point yet, unless the type of information I suggested above is available, to make a decision this summer.

Cordially,



Bette J. Peltola
Associate Dean

BJP/bt