

May 21, 1979

Mrs. Zena Sutherland
Bulletin of Center for Children's Books
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois 60637

Dear Zena:

At Sue's request I am responding to the question before you regarding the Newbery-Caldecott banquet. As you might guess, I continue to be upset by the concept of these awards which:

#1--imply that there can be a single "most distinguished" anything -- especially a book!

#2--seem, based on a belief that books can be judged apart from readers - or - that all readers are alike, since the same standards are applied to all the books under consideration.

#3--support a kind of professional elitism through the committee structure itself.

#4--encourage some book promotion which tends to get confused with literary merit.

Since your concern is just the presentation of the awards, I would like to see an open meeting for all interested in children's lit, where the winners could make their speeches and be questioned by the audience. This meeting should not involve food or booze, and should be viewed as an important content, not social, period. It wouldn't make the award more palatable to me, but it might diminish the impact of #3 and #4.

Fondly,



Doris Bass
Associate Sales Manager
School and College Sales Department

DR:pm

cc: Sue Glazer