

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN LIBRARIANS FOR CHILDREN
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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May 4, 1979

Ms. Priscilla Moulton
10 Pinecliff Drive
Marblehead, MA. 01945

Dear Priscilla:

Yours of April 24th arrived only yesterday. I can't tell you how much I appreciate your taking the time to write about this and I nearly stood up and cheered as I followed from point to point the thrust of your observations on this matter of the N/C Awards.

Zena Sutherland is heading a task force for me collecting the reactions and suggestions of members so I am sending your note on to her about the N/C affairs.

This comes with my best wishes and my thanks again to you for sending me this.

Cordially,

Lillian N. Gerhardt
President

LNG:c1

cc: Ms. Zena Sutherland ✓

April 24, 1979

Translation of letter from Priscilla Moulton
to LNG

Dear Lillian,

I was glad to see in the Newsletter that ALSC is considering alternative modes of celebrating the N-Cowards. May I pass along a couple of thoughts to you for whatever use they may serve? I'll not do more than that, because energy conservation is a vital consideration these days for me as well as for the nation.

My first wish is that (since we do and will continue to have the N-Cowards) their ability to inspire might be aimed most directly at the youthful members of ALSC. The ceremony nearly always is charged with emotion and the speeches nearly always are uplifting. The ALSC leaders all have been invited to dinner as guests, and they sit in front row seats with publishers. Further back and way back are the members who are the rank and file and who pay their own way. I find this rather sad. It seems a violation of what a professional society stands for. It is especially inappropriate where we profess to set standards we would wish children to follow.

Our ALSC office should spend zero time on a banquet. If we must hold a banquet, we can pay a banquet manager. It is professionally demeaning both to the membership and to the secretary to call this leadership. How can anyone take our professional status seriously when we allow our administrative officer to spend one minute on the work of a social secretary? Employ a social secretary and add it to the banquet cost!

2.

Why must the medal recipients suffer the imposition of writing and making a speech to be sold commercially and held up for historians as the life statement of that creator? Is it not enough to have created the book and to have to live with the burden of its being the medal-winner?

We should ask how children are encouraged to read by our actions? Is there anything we do in association with the N-C banquet which encourages reading by children? My guess is that more reading occurs only because the librarians who work directly with the children carry home and impart their excitement for the books and the creators and thus incite a child to try the books. This is good. Therefore, the whole N-C awards ceremony might aim to give that "lift" to those who came to an annual conference. We don't need food and seating by classes. Maybe ritual is helpful, but we should keep recognizing it for what it is. A lot of the ritual simply boosts business; some of it is damaging to sensitive, creative persons.

I suspect the N-C banquet is as entrenched in tradition as the awards themselves, but it would be cherring to think the ceremony might aim to serve the two simple purposes of 1) growing a medal of appreciation and 2) letting the ALSC members meet the winners and thereby feel greater enthusiasm for sharing their books with children.

No need to respond to this hasty and disjointed note.

Priscilla Moulton