

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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UP FOR DISCUSSION

From ALSC board member Zena Sutherland, some thoughts: Over the years, there have been many changes in the procedures used in choosing and announcing the Newbery and Caldecott Awards, and most of the changes have been made for the purpose of broadening participation or increasing efficiency.

In response to some of the comments made by Lillian Gerhardt in her "President's Message" in *TON*, some of the members of ALSC's Board of Directors have proposed an examination of possible alternatives to the Newbery/Caldecott banquet. Some of the facets discussed at the ALSC board meeting in Washington, D.C., were:

1. The cost of the banquet. According to Mary Jane Anderson, ALSC executive secretary, a large number of banquet tickets are sold to non-ALSC members. Can our younger members not afford to buy tickets?
2. The amount of time given by the office, far more to the banquet than to the N/C committee work. This emerged in a study done by the Secretariat Services Study Task Force.
3. The amount of time given by ALSC members who work on the banquet. Could that time perhaps be better spent on projects directly related to library services for children?
4. The space available at a banquet. Would more members be able to see and hear the winners if there were an alternative arrangement?

One of the alternatives discussed was a presentation program that would include all components of the banquet save for the food and its cost, which would enable more members to attend at a minimal cost. It was pointed out at the meeting that there had not always been a banquet. Are we ready to try something new?

Send your comments or questions to the *ALSC Newsletter*; they will be forwarded to the task force that will soon be appointed by President Gerhardt to study the pros and cons.

June 5

Dear Linda -

Would you care to add your ideas or reactions to those we've received? The task force is hoping for broad feedback on which to report in Dallas. Even a postcard -

happily,
Zena Sutherland

THE CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY

MEMORANDUM

To: Zena Sutherland, ALSC Task Force on the
Newbery-Caldecott Banquet

Date: 30, May 1979

From: Linda Ward Callaghan, Children's Services
Northwest Branch Library, 4041 W. North Ave., Chicago, Il. 60639

Subject: Request for feedback on the Banquet

The Newbery and Caldecott Awards are a long honored tradition within the American Library Association and an event that many of us look forward to with excitement and anticipation. Yet, for those of us who are new to the profession, the banquet honoring the recipients takes on the aura of a royal ball.

Many factors often prohibit attendance by younger librarians: the general expense of A.L.A. Conference attendance, limited library budgets to support conference attendance, and attention to "no frills" philosophies in this age of cut-backs. Justifying attendance at such a banquet can be difficult for the young professional who just establishing contacts within the national organization.

Like Cinderella without a fairy godmother, many young librarians "stay at home" rather than pay the price for the banquet. I feel that the banquet ticket itself is rather expensive; combined with the formality of the occasion that demands a certain degree of formal dress, attendance at the banquet can be an expensive proposition. Beyond the cost considerations the atmosphere of the banquet can appear exclusive to new professionals and therefore keep them away.

I feel a more casual reception during which the award speeches could be given and librarians could mingle with peers, publishers, writers, and attendees would be preferable to the formality of the banquet. I know I would feel more comfortable attending such a reception than attending the banquet as it traditionally has been held.

I thank you for your concern for the members opinions and for this opportunity in communicating my feelings with the ALSC board.

Sincerely,


Linda Ward Callaghan