

Report of the Task Force to Investigate Alternatives  
to the Newbery/Caldecott Banquet.

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Zena Sutherland, Chair

Each member of the task force used her own method of inquiring: Julie sent out an information sheet with a form at the foot of the page, and with space for comments; Sue sent a form letter to publishers; Zena sent a copy of the ALSC News Letter column, "Up for Discussion," with a personal note to each addressee.

( Although one board member suggested we were surveying the wrong group, we did have to abide by the motion made by Marilyn Miller.

Motion

We also consulted with hotels in New York, Chicago, and Dallas about prices for wine-and-cheese receptions, and for receptions with a cash bar. And we received information from the ALSC office that - I hope- answers some of the questions members asked in their responses.

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Letters went to past-presidents of the division, chairs and some members of N/C committees, and publishers. I used the ALSC directory to get names and addresses of members, some of whom I knew, and I expected - because these were all active people, that they and the president would favor keeping the banquet, although one board member felt this would be a "jaded" audience.

Of the publishers who responded, 2 favored retaining the banquet, 3 were equivocal, and 19 were in favor of finding an alternative.

Of the past-presidents who responded, 6 favored the banquet, 2 were equivocal, and 7 opted for an alternative. All N/C chairs ( who were not PP's) favored alternative.

Of those present board members who responded, 3 ( plus Barbara Miller, who was counted as a PP) were in favor of the banquet, one was equivocal, 4 were for alternative.

Of the non-ALSC members ( all Texans) 6 were in favor of the banquet, 2 were equivocal, and 12 were in favor of an alternative. Totals were : 44 in favor of the

banquet, 26 were equivocal, and 140 were in favor of an alternative.

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I have all the letters with me; if any member feels I may have misinterpreted his or her opinion, I'd be happy to check the letters and make changes. As you can see on the tabulations I've distributed, there are pro/con/equivocal symbols for letters which were noted as they came in. The non-ALSC members are in the right-hand column.

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The responses and comments are divided into three groups: suggestions for improving the banquet, suggestions for alternatives, and some general suggestions or comments.

In the first group, suggestions for improving the banquet:

1. Cut receiving line, the evening's too long
2. Change procedures for table assignments
3. Give price break to ALSC members, with no tickets sold to non-members before the Conference
4. Charge a small amount to those who come in just for speeches.

5. Publicize a move to less formal dress
6. No free tickets to head table guests except for winners
7. Keep cost of pre-banquet reception down
8. Cut ticket costs even if it lowers profit
9. Introduce nobody in audience but new Honor book winners and old Honor Book and N/C Award winners
10. Limit the head table to 12 people
11. limit speeches to 25 minutes.
12. Pay more attention to Honor Book winners
13. Give a free banquet ticket, once only, to new ALSC members
14. Disband local arrangements tie and leave banquet to the hotel; only planning would be for speakers' table and it doesn't need EXEC. Sec's trip to N.Y.
15. If Weston Woods wants to distribute cassettes, let them handle the thing
16. No favors or programs
17. Get rid of women's club atmosphere

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I should say at some point that pro-dress/ anti/dress opinions, like pro cocktails/ anti cocktails ( for the event, not the reception) are in evidence, as are many other diametrically opposed viewpoints: those who feel no banquet will cut attendance vs. those who feel it will increase it, those who feel the ritual and formality lend glamor, and those who feel that the ritual and ceremony are, to quote various letters, "obsolete," "a farce," or " a worship service." The task force recognizes the sincerity of both sides, but isn't attempting to mediate if indeed it is possible to mediate such differences.

As to suggestions for alternatives to the banquet, they are many.

1. A breakfast party with presentation/ acceptances
2. A brunch or lunch ...
3. cocktail party at which ...
4. buffet dinner ...
5. reception/ awards/ back to reception
6. lunch with \$ money going to an organization or project for children, to be held not in hotel but somewhere like a church or auditorium.
7. meeting/reception in opera house or museum
8. give awards at a pre-conference workshop
9. lecture or panel
10. Something cultural for program: dance, poetry reading, music...
11. have tables in reception room, and music
12. no charge for anything, no food
13. picnic
14. dessert only
15. theatre-in-the-round arrangement
16. involve children
17. Give awards in a different place each year, perhaps during National Library Week or Children's Book Week
18. What most people opted for, an awards assembly followed by a reception. This was mentioned by 47 respondents.

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#### General suggestions:

1. Have tables at reception where publishers can sit with their authors; identify tables with chart or announcements
2. Make it late: 10p.m. talk, then reception

3. present awards; have brief acceptances; publish full speech later
4. Pre-tape or film speeches beforehand, show them at meeting
5. Have a program meeting relating to children's literature instead of speeches
- 6/ Get speeches on the p.m. news
7. Get media cooperation to broadcast live; it would be easier for them if it were exact, not "after banquet"
8. Have local people do ALL the arrangements, including assigning tables and tickets
9. Change focus; simplification would stop perpetuating the drawbacks to our award system
10. Office should spend less time on any program or alternative than it now does
11. Free tickets to Melcher and Scribner winners
12. Limit sales to non-members for any form of observance
14. lower non-member convention rate
15. eliminate speeches
16. evening is less attractive now because of other events ( Moon & Shank)
17. get better media coverage
18. People who don't come to banquet feel uncomfortable coming in late
19. People who come in just for speeches don't know just when to come and can never see or hear well, i.e. they are being penalized for not buying a ticket, when they ought to have an equal opportunity to see and hear well without paying.

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 For the benefit of anyone who has a need-to-know,  
 there were also many suggestions about midwinter

Information on policy and on office time and composition of those who attend....

ALA pays for all conference costs, including rooms

Profit goes to ALA, not ALSC

There can be no charge for any ALSC meeting, so it can't be a package deal, i.e. ticket for meeting-and-reception

The banquet profit ranges from \$100-\$1200; it operates as a running balance and, two years later, goes back into ALA general budget. All conf. expenses come from ALA

The top sales have been 2,000 tickets; it sells out about every 4th year.

The running balance serves for such year-round expenses as guests at head table, flowers at midwinter, extra secretarial help for tickets, announcement at midwinter, and head table reception preceding banquet.

Questions that were asked about what percentage of banquet attendants are old vs. new ALSC members cannot be answered.



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American Library Association

MEMORANDUM

To: Ms. Zena Sutherland

Date: June 11, 1979

From: Mary Jane Anderson *mja*

Re: Statistics kept on N/C ticket distribution through June 1, 1979. (Approximately 200 more will be sold.)

ALSC Members	241	17.6%	17.6
ALSC Members Guests (includes a large number of members, probably much more than 50%)	336	24.5%	7 24.5
Non-ALSC Members	323	23.6%	
Public Library (156)			
School Library (119)			
Special/College/University (48)			7
Others	470	34.3%	17.1
(unidentifiable; ordered by non-members in groups; includes many ALSC members at publisher tables)			
June 1, 1979 TOTAL TICKETS DISTRIBUTED	1370	100.0%	100.0

NOTE: ALSC had 2,534 personal members as of April 30, 1979. Of that number 433 are serving on or newly elected or appointed to the Board and various committees. I think it is likely (judging from ALSC members' ticket requests that I saw) that, in addition to the 433 members expected to attend conference because of assignments, at least 250 more members are in attendance. My educated guess is that 95% or more of the 27% of our members present in Dallas are attending the N/C dinner this year.

*each publisher gets 1 table  
except honor winners,  
MJA:sd*

cc: Lillian N. Gerhardt  
Marilyn L. Miller

*who get 2,  
or N/C winners, who get 3*

*How many tables go to  
publishers? This year,  
44, or about 29%  
new-old dist. (ALSC members?)*

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Querying MJA about reception costs, I learned that in the past, for pre-banquet reception, wine and cheese was for 1 hour, 175 people, \$7 per capita. Her conjecture is that for 2 hours, it would be circa \$10. For cash bar, it depends on a minimum sales (drinks per person) with a guaranteed amount as penalty if minimum is not met. Bartenders are on a ratio basis.

At the Conrad Hilton in Chicago, there is no room charge if the group is part of a convention. IF the policy changes, the non-convention rates are

\$1500, grand ballroom

\$2000, Continental Ballroom

\$2400, International Ballroom. However, it

is possible that convention groups would be charged less, as they are at the Americana in New York. The charge for a wine and cheese reception at the Hilton is \$230 per 100 people; for a cash bar it's \$45 per bar. They estimate 5 bars needed for 1000 people, 8-10 bars for \$2000. They require, on 2 days' notice, a guarantee of numbers. Both receptions would be more expensive during the day than in the evening.

At the Americana in New York, the rent for the one room that would hold so large a group is \$4000; \$2000 if group is part of a convention.

For wine and cheese, it's \$6.1 per capita, plus a % service charge; if that's 25%, it would be \$7.50. (If you reckon room charge too, for 2000 people it would add \$2 per person if that's to be considered as due ALA rather than a gift from ALA) For a cash bar, the Americana charges \$50 per bar and \$40 for each cashier- plus a guarantee of \$1,000 in beverage sales (based on 2 drinks per person) So, for 1000 people it would be \$4 each for bar, \$1 each for cashier, plus same service charge, or about \$6.50 per person (plus the same \$2 p.c. room charge if we include it, making that figure \$8.50) To be on the safe side we might call it \$8 and \$7 (plus 2 if room cost included)

In Dallas:



If we were to try an alternative, therefore, we might keep in mind that not everybody wants two drinks, therefore we can get stuck with a deficit after making a guarantee; also, we might keep in mind the fact that wine can be pre-poured whereas a cash bar, even if there are several bars, is swamped when everyone comes into the room at once.