

ALA American Library Association

TO: Steve Herb, ALSC, Chair
Oralia Garza de Cortes, REFORMA
Sylvia Mavrogenes, ALSC
Patty Wong, REFORMA
Susan Roman, ex officio

FROM: Belpre Task Force Members

RE: Belpre Task Force

Dear Pura Belpre Task Force Members,

Remember me? I'm your chair, Steven Herb, and this note is one helluva long time in coming. You'll recall that we had some phone conversations from my rented apartment in Philadelphia at ALA Midwinter--with Patty at home in California, with Sylvia in Florida and with Oralia from who knows where in Philadelphia. The summary of our recommendations that we discussed by phone (based on the document you had received the previous summer in advance of Annual) were to have moved forward to 1) the task force as a record of our phone conversations, 2) to the ALSC Board; and 3) to REFORMA following Midwinter. Due to a variety of circumstances, none of which had anything to do with the content of our recommendations, the whole process stalled. I didn't send it on to you. The ALSC Board moved the matter to the Executive Committee since time on the agenda had grown short. The Executive Board reviewed it and I think presumed the actions recommended would be taken. REFORMA never received it.

On behalf of the accidental freeze that fell over all concerned, I apologize. I really don't know what happened, but sometimes things do fall between the cracks and my job as Task Force Chair should have been to ensure that the whole process continued to move forward. I am writing to see if we can "unstick" the process and address the issues we raised last year with an eye toward a timely resolution. Whenever people meet regarding the Pura Belpre awards they talk about how important the awards are to REFORMA, to ALSC, and to all the children touched by the wonderful books receiving the recognition. I have no doubt all the people connected to the award in any way--administratively, as judges, as readers of the books, feel that way still. Please review our summary document

and, in light of the time that has gone by, see what still stands, especially since the award will be announced in San Antonio next month. We still need that long term endowment. We still need to resolve the outstanding issues with the ALA awards committee, etc., regarding cash prizes, for example.

The Task Force recommendations from earlier this year is attached as part of the large packet of documents you received last year that traces the administrative history of the award. Please review the recommendations and send your comments to Caroline Ward, ALSC President (and Susan Roman, ALSC Executive Director), who is considering what the next steps should be in the resolution of the remaining administrative issues regarding the Pura Belpre Award. Thanks for your service and again, I'm very sorry about the delay in closing off our portion of the process.

Best wishes,

Steven Herb, Chair
Pura Belpre Task Force

Cc: Caroline Ward
Susan Roman
Toni Bissessar