Amelia Walden, who wrote many YA novels during the 1950-1970s, left funds in her will for YALSA to administer a book award. Criteria for the award were developed and approved by the YALSA Board in 1995. Ms. Walden passed away in 2003, and at the 2004 Annual Conference the YALSA board voted not to accept the funds to administer such an award based on the specifications from her will. Among the reasons for voting not to accept the funds were: the award, which came with a cash prize of $5,000, would compete with the Printz Award; and that the criteria for the award were incongruent with YALSA philosophies.

In December Keith Fiels called a meeting to discuss the matter. Since the administration of the award and related funds were turned down by YALSA, the issue came to ALA. If ALA chose to reject the award and related funds, then they would go to the University of Oregon for the same purpose. If UO passed on administering the award, the funds would go to Christian Scientists.

Before turning away the money, Keith Fiels felt it was worth exploring the possibility of working with the estate to come up with a proposal to use the funds in a manner that both honored the spirit of Walden’s wishes and was agreeable to YALSA. Fiels felt that in light of the changed circumstances surrounding executing her estate (including the death or incapacitation of the will’s executor and the merging of the bank holding the funds in trust with another financial institution) that those holding the funds in trust might be willing to entertain the idea of an alternative proposal. He charged Susan Roman from the ALA Development Office with exploring this option. Susan spoke with the bank representative and he is indeed willing to consider an alternative proposal and is further willing to present it in probate court with the request that it be accepted in lieu of the original one.