

**YALSA Board Meeting
2005 Annual Conference
Chicago, Illinois
June 23-29, 2005**

Topic: Books in Print as Stipulation for Award Eligibility

Background: A concern has been raised by at least one selection committee that the stipulation that a book must be in print in order for it or its author to be eligible for an award is too restrictive.

Action Required: Discussion/Decision

Comments from Mary Arnold, Chairperson 2006 Margaret Edwards Award Committee:

Regarding the wording in the MAE Committee guidelines that specifies that an author's cited work must be in print at the time of the nomination. 2006 Committee discussion points:

1. The original guidelines were developed in 1988; the nature of the publishing business has changed quite a bit in the interim. Many publishers now "live" under a big corporate umbrella; changes in taxation mean that maintaining a big YA backlist is cost-prohibitive, so a title going out-of-print may not be directly related to its continuing impact or popularity, but more likely be a bottom-line decision. For the same reason, a new book by an author may result in earlier, seminal works being brought back into print; an author may be picked up by a new publisher and his/her backlist reprinted; a major award, like MAE, may justify bringing an important title "back from the dead".
2. The MAE 06 committee's research into several early and important YA writers who are still publishing in 2005 reveals that a surprising number of these authors' most influential works that fit the other criteria for the award, and published prior to the 5 year guideline, are OP, and not eligible to be cited under the current "in print" requirement, hampering the committee's commitment to consider the most excellent YA authors for nomination.
3. It has been fairly standard in the past to consider that a title that is still selling will remain in print--therefore, an OP status is a good indication that a particular title does not fulfill the MAE criteria (readership over time; ongoing interest and acceptance of themes and treatment by YA readers); this may not necessarily be the case now. While it's possible that a book that spoke to a teen audience of a specific time period does not have the same impact for a 21st century teen reading audience--that would be something each MAE committee would consider. The most crucial guiding principle is a continuing authentic voice for teen readers, whether they can purchase it or check it out from a library--the "in print" guideline may become more and more of a restricting factor for future groups, depending on the changing nature of YA publishing.

Should the YALSA Board find these arguments compelling, proposed changes to the MAE policies and procedures would be:

Section 4: Definitions:

Point 2: "Book or books" drop the wording "The title or titles must in in-print at the time of nomination." All other wording in that section to remain unchanged.