

## Report of the Ad Hoc Stonewall Book Awards Committee

January 10, 2014

### Committee Charge

Resolved that the GLBTRT Chair appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to make recommendations about the organization and work of the Stonewall Book Awards Committee (SBAC) beginning with the 2015 cycle, including such issues as:

- Whether to maintain the current structure of the committee, develop subcommittees for each award, or have a separate committee for each award.
- How a proposed change would affect demand and supply of committee volunteers.
- If membership on the SBAC (and its potential subcommittees) should require that a mix of expert and general volunteers be selected.
- How to determine the time of year each cycle should start and what the time period should be for when eligible books must have been published.
- What kind of change has there been in workload given increased publishing and a third award.
- Whether a change would affect the number of books publishers would need to supply to the committee(s).

The ad hoc committee will:

- create recommendations that will not conflict with GLBTRT Bylaws or the GLBTRT Leadership Responsibilities document;
- be composed of both former SBAC members and non-members;
- recommend an implementation plan for changes to the board; and
- share a report with the board and membership by 11:59pm, Friday, 10 January 2014 (two weeks before the start of ALA 2014 Midwinter Meeting).

Adopted June 29, 2013 by GLBT Board

### Committee Members

Dave Combe, Librarian Specialist, Ventura County Library

Miguel A. Figueroa, Director of Member Programs, American Theological Library Association

Tess Goldwasser, Youth Services Librarian, St. Mary's County Library

KT Horning, Director of the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Holly Mercer, Associate Dean, University of Tennessee Libraries and Director, Newfound Press

Stephen Stratton, Interim Assoc. Vice President, J.S. Broome Library, CSU Channel Islands

## Committee Observations, Recommendation, and Considerations for Implementation

The committee conducted an online survey to gather input from GLBTRT members and publishers. The survey informed the observations, recommendation, and considerations for implementation below and the following report.

As concerns a three committee/subcommittee structure:

- A majority members thought a reading workload of 150-200 books per award cycle was either somewhat unreasonable (19 of 53 respondents or 36%) or not reasonable at all (9 respondents or 17%).
- A plurality of members indicated that they would be somewhat uncomfortable (17 of 52 respondents or 32%) or not comfortable at all (6 respondents or 12%) reading across all genres and categories.
- A significant majority of members indicated that inclusion of subject specialists was either extremely important (16 of 53 respondents or 30%) or very important (29 respondents or 55%).
- A majority of members indicated that committee member recruitment would be either much easier or easier; that the workload for each member would be either much easier or easier; but that publishers would find the process of identifying where to send books either neither easier nor harder, hard, or much harder.

**Conclusion:** Members see the benefit dividing the reading workload and including subject specialists and believe that three committees/subcommittees could increase member recruitment and improve workload.

As concerns the committee term:

- A strong majority of members (36 of 54 members or 67%) think two years is the ideal term for committee membership.
- A plurality of members (23 of 53 members or 43%) think two years is the ideal term for chair.
- A plurality of members (20 of 53 members or 38%) think the term of the chair should be no longer than or equal to the term of other members of the committee.

**Conclusion:** Members support a two-year term for both committee members and chair.

As concerns a calendar year awards cycle:

- A plurality of members indicated that it was either very important (19 of 53 members or 36%) or extremely important (4 of 53 members or 8%) for the Stonewall Book Award period to be changed to the calendar year.
- A significant majority of publishers (28 of 45 or 62%) indicated that it would be neither easier nor harder to deliver titles in time for consideration.

**Conclusion:** There is strong support among members to go to a calendar year. There is clear indication that publishers would work with the calendar year cycle.

As concerns the number of books publishers supply to committees

- A plurality of publishers, 13 of 45 (29%), rated the level of difficulty for the current distribution of titles as neutral.

- A majority of publishers, 26 of 44 (59%), indicated that distributing to five committees (three Stonewall Book Award Committees/Subcommittees and two book list committees) would be neither easier nor harder.

**Conclusion:** Any proposed changes would not adversely affect distribution of titles by publishers.

*Based on member and publisher input, the Ad Hoc Stonewall Book Awards Committee believes that the following changes would benefit the future of the Stonewall Book Awards Program:*

- *The creation of three subcommittees, under a central Stonewall Book Awards Committee, for administration of the three current award categories.*
- *The establishment of two year terms for committee members and a term equal to or no longer than two years for the chair.*
- *The change to a calendar year for the award cycle.*

The Ad Hoc Committee recognizes that any one of these changes would have significant and strategic implications for the Stonewall Book Awards program, and that if implemented all together would require careful scheduling and execution.

**Therefore, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends that the GLBTRT Executive Board approve the above changes in concept and charge the current Ad Hoc Committee or another committee with developing an appropriate implementation plan and schedule to be reviewed and approved by the GLBTRT Executive Board at the 2014 ALA Annual Conference.**

## Report of the Survey

The following report summarizes the results of the survey administered by the Ad Hoc Stonewall Book Awards Committee.

### Survey and Survey Participant Characteristics

The survey was authored by members of the Ad Hoc Stonewall Book Awards Committee based on the charge provided by the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT) Executive Board. Questions were authored and reviewed by committee members and the survey was formatted in Qualtrics by Karen G. Schneider. The survey was opened to the public on December 14, 2013 and closed on January 2, 2014. The survey was promoted to GLBTRT members, publishers, and other interested groups. Specific channels used to promote the survey included the GLBTRT-L discussion list, direct e-mails to current and past Stonewall Book Award Committee members, and direct e-mails from Stonewall Book Award Committee Members to their publisher liaisons.

There were two general paths of questions for respondents. Respondents that were publishers of GLBTRT materials were taken into a set of publisher questions. Non-publishers were asked a set of general GLBTRT member and GLBT literature questions. Publishers that also indicated they were GLBTRT members were provided an opportunity to complete the non-publisher set of questions.

The survey was completed by 113 respondents, including 58 respondents that indicated that they worked for a publisher of GLBT materials and 55 respondents that indicated that they did not work for a publisher of GLBT materials.

56 of the respondents (49.5%) indicated that they had been a member of the GLBT Round Table and 57 respondents (50.4%) indicated that they were current members. Two publisher respondents indicated that they were current members of the GLBT Round Table, resulting in a total of 57 member respondents. Through this report, the term “publishers” will be used to refer to the 58 respondents who completed the set of questions for publishers and the term “members” will be used to refer to the 55 individuals and two publishers (total 57) that indicated they were members of the GLBT Round Table. The survey was not completed by any individuals who were neither members of the GLBT Round Table nor publishers of GLBT materials.

### Member Respondent Characteristics

Of the 57 members, 3 (5%) had been members for less than one year, 18 (32%) had been members for one to five years, 11 (19%) had been members for five to ten years, and 25 (44%) had been members for more than ten years.

18 members (32%) had served on the Stonewall Book Awards Committee and 39 (68%) had not. 11 members (19%) had served on a book award committee for another ALA Round Table or Divisions and 46 (81%) had not. Neither of the two publisher members had ever served on either the Stonewall Book Award Committee or a book award committee for another ALA Round Table or Division. Among the other book award committees on which members had served were those of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) [Newbery, Caldecott,

Batchelder, Wilder, Notable Children’s Books]; the American Library Association [ABC/Clio Greenwood Library Publishing Award]; Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) [Sophie Brody Award, Notable Books]; Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) [Printz Award, Nonfiction, Popular Paperback, Best Books for Young Adults]; and other Round Tables [SRRT – Coretta Scott King Book Award and Rainbow List; IFRT – Oboler].

### Member Response to the GLBT Publishing Environment

Members were asked several questions to better understand their awareness of and use of various book awards and lists in the GLBT publishing environment. Throughout member responses, there was a clear indication of a strong awareness and usefulness of the Stonewall Book Awards and both the Rainbow List and the Over the Rainbow List.

53 members (96%) indicated that they regularly reference the Stonewall Book Awards for professional work or personal reading. The Lambda Literary Award was the second most referenced (43 respondents or 78%) followed by the Over the Rainbow List (39 respondents or 71%) and the Rainbow List (37 respondents or 67%). Among the other sources mentioned were Out in Print, Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide, Foreword Magazine awards, librarian blogs, the GLBTRT Newsletter Book Reviews, and other awards (Tiptree, Ruth Benedict award, John Boswell award).

**Figure 1: GLBT book awards, book lists, or book review sources that respondents regularly reference for professional work or personal reading**

Band Of Thebes	10	18%
Bisexual Book Awards	7	13%
Gaylactic Spectrum Awards	3	5%
Green Carnation Prize	1	2%
Lambda Literary Award	43	78%
GLBTRT Over the Rainbow List	39	71%
The Publishing Triangle	19	35%
(Elisa Rolle) Rainbow Awards	3	5%
GLBTRT/SRRT Rainbow List	37	67%
Stonewall Book Awards	53	96%
Other	6	11%

The Stonewall Book Awards demonstrated a strong usefulness in informing members’ personal reading, recommendations to colleagues and patrons, and acquisitions for libraries. The Stonewall Book Awards proved the most influential of all of the awards in each of the identified categories, followed by the Rainbow List, Over the Rainbow List, and Lambda Literary Awards.

**Figure 2: Use of GLBT book awards, book lists, and book review sources**

	Personal reading	Recommended reading for friends or colleagues	Promotion to library users	Purchasing/collection development for libraries	Recommendations to colleagues for library acquisition
Band Of Thebes	9	5	3	3	3
Bisexual Book Awards	7	4	2	2	4
Gaylactic Spectrum Awards	4	2	2	2	3
Green Carnation Prize	3	0	1	1	2
Lambda Literary Award	33	18	13	23	23
GLBTRT Over the Rainbow List	29	24	17	17	19
The Publishing Triangle	14	6	4	8	9
(Elisa Rolle) Rainbow Awards	5	3	2	2	4
GLBTRT/SRRT Rainbow List	25	22	17	19	21
Stonewall Book Awards	40	31	27	36	32
Other	3	3	2	2	3

Members demonstrated a strong awareness of both the Over the Rainbow and Rainbow Lists. In addition to their strong performance in the questions above, respondents were asked about their awareness of the lists. Of the 53 members who completed the question, all but 1 (98%) indicated that they were aware of the lists. When asked to share thoughts about the two book lists, member respondents contributed over thirty comments. Among the trends in comments were:

- Utility of the lists (6)
  - “Both are helpful for selection for my library and my personal reading”
  - “I think they are very useful in that they provide recommended reading lists that can be used for collection development and personal enjoyment. By not awarding just one book, these lists can reach a wider range of people”
  - “Useful summary for collection checking and development.”
  - “I use both lists, both for personal reading and for collection development. I feel that they are useful, and I am aware of other librarians that use them professionally, especially when first beginning a LGBTQ collection, or for justifying the inclusion of LGBTQ books in their collections - both to other staff and to customers.”
  - “I use them both, for myself, for collection development, and to suggest titles for friends to read.”
  - “I think both lists are very important as they serve as great Reader Advisory tools for LGBT literature - and can provide a broader range than the few Stonewall winners and honorable mentions.”
- Praise (4)
  - “I love them both!”
  - “I think they are great and a wonderful services to libraries and readers!”
  - “I am delighted they exist.”
  - “They're great!”
- Name confusion (4)

- “The names are confusing. There should be a way to easily distinguish between the two lists. More importantly, it is confusing that there are these two lists, plus the Stonewall "honor books" in three categories. Please stop the confusing list proliferation! It does not help librarians or readers, and it certainly does not help publishers and authors.”
- “I can see one additional list per year, but having two with similar names seems a bit much.”
- “I can't ever keep the names separate and get confused by which list is which kind of book every time”
- “I do think there is some branding confusion, though, both between Stonewall and the lists & between the two lists themselves. For example, I can never remember which lists is for YA and which is for Adult literature. Perhaps the RT could look into better melding the lists with the Stonewall Award to make it easier to people. I think it is hard for non-GLBTRT members to follow the difference between the three Stonewall Awards and the two lists.”
- Distinction from awards programs (4)
  - “I think that they serve a great purpose. Awards and book lists are very different, and both are needed as in Printz and Best Books for YALSA. With the large number of LGBT books published each year, GLBTRT does a service in publicizing as many quality titles as possible.”
  - “These two lists are "notable books" and as such do not conflict with Stonewall. It is similar to the ALSC model.”
  - “They are both very important and very different from the Stonewall Awards.”
  - “They are very important. Before them we only produced the award lists. We need to promote more books than just award winners. They can continue to function along with our awards just as such groups do in other parts of the organization.”
- Overlap with awards program (4)
  - “They repeat a lot of the same work SBAC does. Inclusion on a bibliography is not an award.”
  - “Nice list to have, but in some ways they duplicate the Stonewall Awards, since the awards include honor books. In other words. the Stonewall Awards are already a list.”
  - “Think they are redundant to the awards and take away from the award's prestige. It is like saying the RT is divided, presenting the best with the awards and then saying the rest are second bests. Potential confusion of authors and publishers claiming the rainbows are awards. As it is honor book winners often claim they won a Stonewall when in reality they were only finalists.”
  - “Clarify the distinction that these are not awards, but recommended reading lists for librarians, parents, teachers and readers. An author/publisher does not WIN anything by being included in these lists.”

Additionally, there were some expressions of concern over the length and number of lists (3), the formation and history of the lists (2), and interest in serving on the list committees (1).

### **Member and Publisher Response to Stonewall Book Award Policies and Procedures**

The survey provided several opportunities to receive information from members and publishers about the Stonewall Book Awards Committee’s current structure and proposed changes.

Among the broad topics were committee terms, award cycle, and committee reading workload, composition, and structure. Publishers were specifically asked how changes to policies and procedures might affect their workflows and the delivery of titles for consideration.

### *Committee Terms*

**A strong majority of members think two years is the ideal term for committee membership.**

36 of 54 members (67%) indicated two years as the ideal term of service for a committee member. This was followed in frequency by three years (11 respondents or 20%); four years (4 respondents or 7%); and one year (3 respondents or 6%).

A similar conclusion, though with slightly less consensus, was provided for the term of the chair/co-chair. **A plurality of members think two years is the ideal term for chair.** 23 of 53 members (43%) indicated two years as the ideal term of service for a chair/co-chair. This was followed in frequency by three years (13 respondents or 25%); one year (12 respondents or 23%); and four years (5 respondents or 9%).

**A plurality of members think the term of the chair should be no longer than or equal to the term of other members of the committee.** Members indicated strong support (20 of 53 responses or 38%) for the proposal to change the term of the chair to a term no longer than or equal to other members of the committee. 16 members (30%) neither support nor oppose a change to the chair's term to a term no longer than or equal to other members of the committee. 9 members (17%) somewhat support the change. 6 members (11%) somewhat oppose the change. 2 members (4%) strongly oppose the proposed change.

### *Stonewall Book Award Cycle*

**A plurality of members indicated that it was either extremely important or very important for the Stonewall Book Award period to be changed to the calendar year.** 19 of 53 members (36%) indicated that this change was very important. 4 members (8%) indicated that the change was extremely important. 18 members (34%) indicated that the change was neither important nor unimportant. 4 members (8%) and 8 members (15%) indicated that the proposed change was very unimportant or not at all important, respectively.

Publishers were asked how a change to a calendar year award cycle might affect their ability to provide pre-pub galley or e-galleys to committee members in time for consideration. **A significant majority (28 of 45 publishers or 62%) indicated that it would be neither easier nor harder to deliver titles in time for consideration.** 6 publishers (13%) indicated it would be much easier and 9 publishers (20%) indicated it would be easier to deliver titles. Only one publisher in each response category responded that it would be harder or much harder to deliver titles for consideration. Comments shared by publishers focused on the financial hardships of sending final print or print galley copies (4); interest in the provision of e-books/e-galleys (3); concern for flexibility in the publication schedule for some titles (2); the importance of having a clearly defined cycle, whatever it may be (2); the benefits to publishers, authors, and consumers of a calendar year (5); the difficulty of remember the current cycle (1). Some helpful suggestions included providing some flexibility for books with November or December publication dates to be considered in either the current year or next year.



*Committee Reading Workload, Composition, and Structure*

Members were more divided regarding the reading workload currently expected of Stonewall Book Award Committee members. **A small majority of members thought a reading workload of 150-200 books per award cycle was either somewhat unreasonable (19 of 53 respondents or 36%) or not reasonable at all (9 respondents or 17%).** 10 members (19%) thought the workload was very reasonable and 12 (23%) thought the workload was somewhat reasonable. 3 respondents (6%) were neutral.

When asked what would be considered a reasonable maximum reading workload for a committee member, the 52 members’ responses averaged 128.79 books per cycle, with the lowest suggested amount 23 books and the highest suggested amount 250 books.

Members were also divided when asked how comfortable they would be reading across genres and categories for all three awards (adult fiction, adult nonfiction, and children’s/YA). **A plurality of members indicated that they would be somewhat uncomfortable (17 of 52 respondents or 32%) or not comfortable at all (6 respondents or 12%) reading across all genres and categories.** 18 members (35%), making this the single largest response category, indicated that they would be very comfortable and 8 members (15%) indicated that they would be somewhat comfortable reading across genres and categories. 3 members (6%) were neutral.

There was strong support for the inclusion of subject specialists for each of the three award categories (adult fiction, adult nonfiction, and children’s/YA) of the Stonewall Book Awards. **A significant majority of members indicated that inclusion of subject specialists was either extremely important (16 of 53 respondents or 30%) or very important (29 respondents or 55%).** Only one member in each response category responded that inclusion of subject specialists was either very unimportant or not at all important. 6 members (11%) thought inclusion of subject specialists was neither important nor unimportant.

Extrapolating from concerns over the reading workload and inclusion of subject specialists, members were asked to share their thoughts for how the creation of separate committees/subcommittees for each of the award categories might affect the Stonewall Book Awards program. **A majority of members indicated that committee member recruitment would be either much easier or easier; that the workload for each member would be either much easier or easier; but that publishers would find the process of identifying where to send books either neither easier nor harder, hard, or much harder.**

**Figure X: Effects of a three-committee structure on the Stonewall Book Awards Program**

	Much easier	Easier	Neither easier nor harder	Harder	Much harder
Committee member recruitment would be...	8	27	9	7	2
Workload for each member would be...	22	28	3	0	0
In terms of identifying where to send books, publishers would find it...	2	8	20	14	9

*Publisher Delivery of Titles*

Throughout the survey, publishers indicated a consistent ability to accommodate changes to the Stonewall Book Awards program.

When asked how difficult it is to distribute books to the current Stonewall Book Awards Committee and the Rainbow List and Over the Rainbow List committees, **a plurality of publishers, 13 of 45 (29%), rated the level of difficulty for the current distribution of titles as neutral.** 22 publishers (49%) rated the delivery process in one of three easy categories – 6 respondents as very easy; 8 as easy; 8 as somewhat easy. 10 publishers (22%) rated the delivery process in one of the three difficult categories – 5 respondents as somewhat difficult; 3 as difficult; 2 as very difficult.

Comments on the current delivery process mostly focused on suggested improvements to the process, including publicizing instructions (2); improving the availability of member names and mailing addresses (5); and shipping to only one address or consolidating multiple titles into a single shipment (2). Four publishers commented on the expense of shipping titles.

When asked if establishing three subject specific committees (and still keeping the Rainbow Book List and Over the Rainbow Book List) would affect publishers' ability to distribute books to committees, publishers again indicated a neutral stance. **A majority of publishers, 26 of 44 (59%), indicated that distributing to five committees would be neither easier nor harder.** 11 publishers (25%) indicated that distributing to five committees would be harder. 7 publishers (16%) indicated that distributing to five committees would be easier. No publishers selected either the much easier or much harder responses.

Comments on the potential for distribution to five committees continued to focus on the importance of clear instructions (1); the preference to ship to just one address or consolidate requests into single orders (3); and the desire to have address easily available (2). 4 publishers saw value and benefit in having subject expertise on expanded committees/subcommittees. 5 publishers perceived that specialized committees might make their distribution easier or affect no change (e.g. they only publish children's materials and so would still only be sending to one committee). 4 publishers shared concerns over a more complicated process or increased cost.

### *Additional Member Comments*

Members were provided a final opportunity to submit any additional comments. The range of comments included:

- Support for three committees [4]
- Interest in raising the number of members of the SBAC (e.g. 10-14) [2]
- Concerns for how changes could be made within existing bylaws of the round table [2]
- Support for a coordinator to receive all books and distribute to appropriate people [2]
- Concern for how certain questions might affect procedures and policies [1]
- Interest in service on Stonewall Book Awards Committee [1]
- Suggestion for evaluation methods (nominate a title; eliminate scoring of titles) [1]
- Suggestion for integrating the awards and the lists (i.e., the award committees would also create the book lists) [1]
- Reminder that there is one ALA-Approved Award with three categories – changes may require revisiting the ALA Awards Committee [1]