

YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Seattle
January 25 – 29, 2013

Topic: Readers' Choice List Proposal

Background: The Reader's Choice Book List was originally created in 2009 as a response to member requests for more opportunities for virtual participation. It was viewed as a grassroots effort to offer members more engagement opportunities with teen literature via a crowd-sourced vetted list of top teen reads. Participation in the project, however, has been low both in terms of votes and nominations. With the success of The Hub as a virtual engagement opportunity around YA literature, and with YALSA's new focus on capacity building in its strategic plan, the board may want to consider sunsetting Readers' Choice to free up resources to pursue projects that are more closely aligned with YALSA's mission. Jack Martin has provided a proposal below.

Action Required: Discussion

Overview

The Reader's Choice Book List was originally created to engage members virtually to collectively vet a list of recommended reading materials based on thematic categories. While the idea itself seemed sound at the time, member participation in this project has been extremely low, both in terms of nominations throughout the year and final votes. During the first year Reader's Choice had a total of 91 nominations with 56 votes. During its second year, the project saw a dramatic reduction in the number of nominations (55), and only four out of the seven categories reached the minimum of 5 nominations. One category had zero. 113 members voted during the second year.

Proposal

Sunset the Reader's Choice Book List for 2013 and reallocate resources to other YALSA initiatives in the Action Plan. Work with The Hub manager to offer more crowdsourcing opportunities for members to develop themed lists in that space.

Rationale

- While literature focused projects such as The Hub broke the record in terms of page views and comments this year, the Reader's Choice Book List has not achieved success with the membership.
- Sunsetting the Reader's Choice would not be eliminating virtual member engagement around the topic of YA literature, as other opportunities are still available: members can still blog for The Hub and participate in Hub activities, such as the Morris & Nonfiction Reading Challenge. Also, should the Board vote positively on the proposed YA

Literature section of YALSA, many other opportunities for member engagement will arise as this new community around YA Literature becomes established.

- Current Reader's Choice statistics imply that there is no need or demand for this type of resource, as other outlets like GoodReads are already well established and heavily used for readers' choice activities (over 1 million votes were cast in this year's readers' choice awards).
- Sunsetting this list will free up some member and staff time to focus on projects that are more in-demand by members, especially as indicated in the recent member survey, such as providing *YALS* full text online, creating a programming database and increasing YALSA's presence at the local and regional level.

Recommended Board Action

The board vote to sunset the Readers' Choice list, effective immediately, and to direct the President-Elect to find other member engagement opportunities for the current Readers' Choice Taskforce members.

Additional Resources

- 2009 Annual Conference Board Document #15, "Request for Board Action: Readers' Choice List," <http://ow.ly/gI9rd> (.pdf)
- 2010 Midwinter Meeting Board Document #27, "Readers' Choice List," <http://ow.ly/gI9xK> (.pdf)
- Goodreads.com Reader's Choice Awards, www.goodreads.com/choiceawards/best-books-2012