

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Seattle  
January 19-24, 2007**

**Topic:** YA Literature Symposium

**Background:** At the Board's meeting at 2004 Annual, a taskforce was appointed to look into the feasibility of creating a new award for a first time YA author and for establishing a symposium for YA literature. The taskforce recommended to the Board that both of these projects be pursued. Funding for the new initiatives would come from the Morris Endowment. At the 2006 Midwinter Meeting, the Board moved to establish a taskforce that would plan and implement the YA Literature Symposium which would be held every other year and be a separate event from Annual and Midwinter.

**Action Required:** Action

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COMMITTEE NAME = YALSA YA Literature Symposium Task Force

CHAIR = Stephanie A. Squicciarini

FUNCTION STATEMENT =

- To plan and implement YALSA's first Young Adult Literature Symposium, consider the idea of the symposium as a venue for presenting scholarly papers on topics relating to young adult literature (papers could then be gathered and published by YALSA), explore the option of including vendors as a means of generating revenue, and work with the YALSA office as necessary. This event should:
  - feature, but not be limited to, authors who have recently won YALSA awards
  - be at least one full day long
  - be funded in part by monies from the Morris endowment
  - be a biennial event held separately from the ALA Annual Conference or Midwinter Meeting
  - be held in 2007 or no later than 2008.
- To provide progress reports to YALSA's Board for their meetings at Annual and Midwinter until completion of the project.

ACCOMPLISHED = We have done a lot of work on brainstorming format and content. Below is as brief a summary of our work and ideas as I can give:

**YALSA Literature Symposium**

**Overarching Theme: YA Literature across the Ages**

- Dual meaning...across time and across age/reading levels

- Focus on FIRSTS: First YALSA YA Literature Symposium, Authors who won Printz or Honor with First YA Book.

**Suggested Target Audience:**

- Librarians, Library School Students, Teachers.

**Location for Symposium:**

- NYC: Strongly suggested because of potential publisher involvement, Bill Morris connection, ease/frequency air travel. Potential drawback: higher cost of hotels to attendees, may only draw from local areas.
- Indianapolis is suggested because you can walk places and the hotels aren't too expensive.
- Chicago requires cabs and is expensive. We think more teachers and librarians come if we have it in the middle of the country, but we also think that we'll have substantially less publisher involvement.
- Potentially "attach" Symposium to another event, but we don't want it to detract from the Symposium excitement.

**Length of Symposium:**

- Day and a half to two days: allows for enough content to be worth expense and allows for ease of attendance (not too long) with longer stays if desired
  - Big kickoff event on Friday and then all day on Saturday...allows people to travel on Sunday...allows people who cannot get time off during work schedules to attend...hinders attendance by those who don't want to do attend such programs on weekends (not going to please everyone!)

**Format of Symposium:**

- Keynote address
- Special meal events with speakers
- Authors and librarians as moderators/interviewers...focus on authors...people want to hear the author speak, not necessarily the moderator
- Concurrent Breakout sessions, attendees choice

**Speakers for Symposium:**

- Main keynoter, meal speakers, program speakers
- General feeling...include HC author for major keynote address...honor the HC/Bill Morris Legacy, Printz authors, Printz authors with HC connection, Printz authors who won with first (YA) book.

**Cost Structure for Symposium: Similar to other Conferences**

- Reduced costs for YALSA members, students
- Provide one or two Symposium Scholarships (who would come up with criteria?)
- Build in an amount to go into Bill Morris Fund to plan for future events
- Package deal for Symposium and special meal events

**Sponsors for Symposium:**

- SLJ very interested (they used the term “partnering”) Contact: Brian Kenney
- Publishers of invited authors (perhaps cover travel/hotel expenses, provide goodie bags for attendees, sponsor specific meal event)
- Other review/professional journals

**General Ideas:**

- Catherine Balkin to introduce Bill Morris Legacy/Tribute
- Strong focus/presence of Printz award winners...help further recognition for award and winners
- Have survey/feedback for attendees to complete. Survey would include suggestions for authors/speakers, topics, locations, etc.
- Have annotated reading lists available ahead of time. If themed programs, include across the theme. If author-focused, include author booklist (i.e. if first time authors/Printz winners, include that list).
- Special events sponsors – either at an extra cost to attendees, or fully covered by sponsors.
- Have students submit papers to be considered for publication in connection with symposium. Selected entries to receive free admission to next symposium.
- Students and attendees submit scholarly papers on topics covered at symposium to be published by YALSA.
- Stay away from political speakers.
- Limit authors who write for adults and then enter YA market...unless feel really strongly about inclusion.
- Have raffle for winner to get author visit to school/library (need to get publisher and author buy-in on this)
- Raffle for collection of books by authors present at Symposium
- Raffle for YALSA membership (Three Year Membership?)
- Consider limited Exhibits
- Plan Author Autographing Sessions

**Rough Idea for Potential Schedule (Build in time for author book signings)**

**FRIDAY**

**Evening** – A Kick-Off Banquet with a WOW keynote speaker (ticketed event for about \$30)  
Authors suggested: Walter Dean Myers, Robert Lipsyte (Have an author who worked with or knew Bill Morris well)

**SATURDAY**

**8:30-10:30 am** – Breakfast with a speaker (ticketed event for about \$15)

Speaker could be author from one of our panels: Thought here is that author we select to facilitate each of the other programs could be the meal speaker (for each meal event).

Again...it gives these WOW authors a chance to present to the entire group. The meal speakers could be the threads that tie the entire program together. Other suggestion is to have authors representing different genres, suggested by publishers and selected by Task Force/YALSA.

**10:45-Noon** – Two different panels, concurrently\*

Authors who have won a Printz with their first books

Authors across the Ages: Perhaps two who crossover from J into YA and two that write for YA into older YA/adult

**12:00-2:00 pm** – Lunch with a speaker (ticketed event for about \$20)

Speaker could be author from one of our afternoon panels

**2:15-3:30 pm** – Two different panels, concurrently\*

Novels in verse

Non-fiction (perhaps paired with historical fiction)

**3:45 – 5:00 pm** – A panel, with someone offering concluding remarks

## **SUNDAY**

**8:30-10:30 am** – Breakfast with a speaker (ticketed event for about \$15)

**10:45-Noon** – A tribute panel to Bill – I’m suggesting we end it with this, and those not interested can schedule their flights home a bit earlier. We might even advertise this as a “special panel for Bill’s old friends.”

### **General Ideas for authors/topics:**

- Invite the publishing community to submit YA author names for consideration. For example, we could ask them for a new voice in YA literature for the Saturday breakfast. For the lunch speaker, we might ask them to suggest YA fantasy authors. And for the Sunday breakfast, we could ask them to suggest authors whose books have a lot of humor. Or pick another genre – mysteries, sports, etc. Either our committee or YALSA could choose from the author names submitted. My point is that we would then have more variety. Plus, I think if publishers felt they were involved in the process, we would get more support from them.
- Reasons for thinking that a person from the panel could be our speakers at these meal functions. One is that this author can be whoever we select to be the facilitator of the panel. Since that person will be more of a leader in the program...having them speak at a function would give people a taste for what that program will be like...and since we may not be able to duplicate programs...allows attendees to experience whoever we select as the best person to facilitate. One idea...could be amazing if we can pull it off...is to ask Terry Trueman to do a poetry reading...of his poem Sheehan that began the road to Stuck in Neutral. For those of you who don’t know it...in the beginning of each chapter...the portions of the Dad’s poem that are there...are actually from Trueman’s poem, Sheehan...about how he felt and dealt with the birth of his son. This could be a really fabulous way to lead into the program on authors winning with their first book...since it is this poem that inspired the Printz Honor Winning book (for his first book), it is really a personal look into the life of the author and how his life brought about an award-winning book, and could be a huge WOW! The author we select to facilitate each of the other programs could be the meal speaker. Again...it gives these WOW authors a chance to present to the entire group. The meal speakers could be the threads that tie the entire program together.

**YALSA Board of Directors – Midwinter 2007  
YA Literature Symposium**

- Authors who won a Printz Medal or Honor with their first YA book: Laurie Halse Anderson, Jennifer Donnelly (she also writes adult books), K.L. Going, John Green, An Na, Meg Rosoff, Louise Rennison (overseas), Terry Trueman.
- Across the Ages: Bruce Coville, Gail Carson Levine, Gordon Korman, Sharon Creech, Ken Oppel, Marcus Zusak, Sarah Dessen, Joan Bauer, Karen Cushman
- Novels in Verse: Karen Hesse, Sonya Sones, Mel Glenn, Kristen Smith (new).
- Authors who have written across the ages: Classics in YA Literature: M.E. Kerr, S.E. Hinton, Terry Davis, Judy Blume (across age levels and time!)
- Authors who've stood the test of time: Tamora Pierce, Avi, Joan Bauer, Ursula LeGuin ...still maintain their appeal, how do they do it, what are their challenges, burned out?
- Authors writing more literary works for teens

TERM WORK =

ACTIONAREA = marketing, continuous learning, associations sustainability

STRATEGIES OUTREACH =

STRATEGIES = publication, collaboration

STRATEGIES OTHER = Students could submit papers for publication in YALS, YOYA, or SLJ.

PARTNERS = educators, media, colleagues

CONCERNS = This is my first time preparing a PreConference Committee Report. Please let me know if this format is workable. We have done a lot of brainstorming and work on suggestions for content and format. Much of the work has been completed within the past couple months with the switch in Chairs...and we are still brainstorming! We are an energetic, passionate, and eager group! There is also concern or perhaps better put, interest in the Task Force Committee being involved all the way through the actual execution and presentation of the Symposium in 2008 :-)

**Proposed Action from YALSA's Executive Committee:**

- That the Board charge the taskforce with:
  - Developing a call for proposals for 20 concurrent breakout sessions, to work with YALSA staff to implement the RFP and to implement it no later than May of 2007.
  - Planning the Friday Kick-Off event.
  - Planning a Sunday closing event.
  - Working with YALSA staff to develop a conference schedule for the event, including times of sessions and meals.
  - Developing a student scholarship program for the event.
  - Researching similar events and make recommendations as to whether or not an exhibit area is feasible.
- Others?