

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

Topic: Request for Board Action: YA Non-Fiction Award

Background: In the November issue of *School Library Journal*, Marc Aronson suggested in his article that there should be a non-fiction award for young adult literature. Amy Alessio contacted him about the idea, and they asked YALSA President Judy Nelson to establish an exploratory task force. Christine Allen, Pam Spencer Holley, Betty Carter and Allen Nichols joined Marc and Amy to discuss the issue. The exploratory task force is asking that a task force be established to develop a proposal for a YA nonfiction award to submit to the Board and to ALA's Awards Committee.

Action Required: Action

Young Adult Non-Fiction Award Recommendation

Factors to Consider

- Current Non-Fiction Awards
- Young Adult Non-Fiction Genre
- Criteria for Unique Status of Possible New Award
- Feasibility of a non-fiction award for YALSA

Current Non-Fiction Awards

Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards

<http://www.hbook.com/awards/bghb/>

“Winners are selected in three categories: Picture Book, Fiction and Poetry, and Nonfiction. Two Honor Books may be named in each category.” (Children and YA)

National Council of Teachers of English

<http://www.ncte.org/elem/awards/orbispictus/106877.htm?source=gs>

Orbis Pictus Nonfiction Award – Any title of nonfiction (for grades K-8) informational literature that has as its central purpose the sharing of information. Includes biography, but excludes textbooks, folklore, poetry

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

http://www.asPCA.org/site/PageServer?pagename=edu_yabookaward

The Henry Bergh Young Adult Award will be presented annually to an author that makes a contribution to humane young adult literature with a publication date in the preceding year the award is given. Books should be written for an audience of young adults between the

YALSA Board of Directors – Midwinter 2007
Request for Board Action: YA Non-Fiction Award

ages of 13-17. Works of fiction, non-fiction, and collections of short stories, essays, or poetry by one author are eligible.

Canada Information Book Award

<http://www.library.ubc.ca/edlib/table/awards/information.htm>

The Children's Literature Roundtables of Canada Information Book Award is given to a book that arouses interest, stimulates curiosity, captures the imagination, and fosters concern for the world around us. The award's aim is to recognize excellence in Canadian publishing of non-fiction for children. The criteria include accuracy, clarity, imaginative approach, appropriateness of organization and format, and sensitivity to ethnocentric and gender biases.

New Zealand Post Book Awards for Children and Young Adults

http://www.booksellers.co.nz/nzpb_abt_awards.htm

This award is for books which present well-authenticated data, with consideration given to imaginative presentation, interpretation and style. Poetry, folklore and retellings of myths and legends will be included in this category. Text books and resource kits are not eligible. Non-fiction books with intended audiences ranging from children through to young adults may be entered in this category.

Sibert Award – ALSC

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawds/sibertmedal/sibertterms/sibertmedalterms.htm>

The ALSC Informational Book Award shall be awarded annually to the author of the most distinguished informational book published in English during the preceding year. There are no limitations as to the character of the book except that it be original work although poetry and traditional literature (e.g., folktales) are not eligible.

National Book Foundation – National Book Awards

<http://www.nationalbook.org/nbaentry.html>

Not specifically for nonfiction, but they have had non-fiction finalists in the young people's literature category. Full-length books of fiction and general nonfiction are eligible. Collections of short stories and collections of essays by one author are eligible. Collected and selected poems by one author are eligible. All books must be published in the United States.

Jane Addams Book Award

<http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~cfjab/jaddams.htm>

“The Jane Addams Children's Book Award has been presented annually since 1953... for the children's book of the preceding year that most effectively promotes the cause of peace, social justice and world community.”

AAAS/SB&F/Subaru Award [American Association for the Advancement of Science/Science Books & Films/Subaru--which provides the \$5000 award].

<http://www.sbsonline.com/prizes>

“The AAAS/Subaru *SB&F* Prize for Excellence in Science Books celebrates outstanding science writing and illustration for children and young adults. The prizes are meant to encourage the writing and publishing of high-quality science books for all age groups.”

Green Earth Book Award, sponsored by the NewtonMorasco Foundation

http://www.newtonmarascofoundation.org/programs/a_ge.cfm

“The Children Fiction award is comprised of a monetary award of \$1,250 to the author and \$1,250 to the illustrator (or \$2,500 if the author and illustrator is the same person). The Young Adult Fiction award is comprised of a \$2,500 monetary award to the author. The Nonfiction award is comprised of \$2,500 to the author. In addition, a \$500 donation will be provided to the environmental organization chosen by each winner and approved by the Newton Marasco Foundation.”

Young Adult Non-Fiction Genre

“Nonfiction outnumbers fiction in new titles published each year by 4 to 1, so the nonfiction judges read twice what we did — 500 submissions.” This quote from Marianne Wiggins in the November 26 LA Times described her experience judging adult fiction for the National Book Award.

The group has concerns that there is not enough non-fiction being published specifically for young adults. Honoring the award every other year would be one way to ensure quality candidates and the promotion of non-fiction for young adults. While there is a great deal of non-fiction published in series, articles, electronic formats, this group felt the award should be limited to print at this time, but could include series titles in the same way the graphic novel task force includes them. It could also then include graphic novels. In the future, formats such as a book which works with a website or CD could be included as a bundle.

Criteria for Unique Status of Possible New Award

What would make the YALSA award different? Criteria, as suggested by Marc Aronson, would include:

Writing: *effective communication, from a minimum of clear and useful to a maximum of compelling and inspiring.*

Research : *author has done his/her homework, a subset of this is Authority -- backmatter, documentation*

Presentation: *mix of text and visual (Sibert has started to consider this, dicey at times if a book has no art, or if the publisher, not the author, plays the key role)*

Young Adult Specific : *this book (article, website, skywriting) has something exceptional to offer kids 12-18. That could range from what it is about -- sex, drugs, rock and roll -- to the voice, to the look and feel. This could also include specified criteria for readability for this age group.*

Feasibility

Does YALSA have room in its calendar or budget for another award? These are factors an official task force would have to address fully, but this group did briefly discuss these.

YALSA Board of Directors – Midwinter 2007
Request for Board Action: YA Non-Fiction Award

Permabound has contacted Beth Yoke about sponsoring an award for material that could be used in the classroom. While this group does not want content of the material to be limited, this link to schools could well give a non-fiction award a large scope.

The Young Adult Literature Symposium is scheduled to be held every other year, and could be a place to honor the non-fiction winner with a small reception. As it would take a while for ALA Awards approval of a non-fiction award, it should not interfere with the work of the initial task force for the 2007 event. It could be a draw for attendance to future events. If it were tied in to the Symposium the award could then be sponsored with the Bill Morris money designated for that event.

The award could be sponsored with that endowment even if it were not part of the symposium, but it would have to follow the stipulations, and would then be the third project sponsored by that money. ALA guidelines prohibit YALSA from touching the principle, and this would have to stay within the interest generated.

Conclusion

Allen Nichols stated one of our strongest arguments for the benefits of such an award to YALSA:

This award could help legitimize YALSA to teachers and educators who, if they even know about us, look at us as dealing with controversial fiction. Non-fiction award winners could be used in the classroom more easily than Printz winners because of the content issues that often arise with fiction works... People think NF is more legitimate than fiction so I see this as one more opportunity to show what great things teen librarians do for their customers.

While there are many non-fiction awards listed above, many are combined with children's literature and/or have specific subject categories. While the group considered that YALSA has a mechanism in place for adult nonfiction awards with its Alex Awards, which recognize 10 titles a year, the list has been predominately fiction. We are concerned with the perception of award duplication, so it could be important to build this award in the future with schools or formats to develop it as truly new and unique.

The group strongly recommends that YALSA pursue the establishment of an award for young adult non-fiction literature. We feel that an official task force should be appointed to plan out the details of a formal proposal for the YALSA Board for the Annual Conference in 2007.