But the heart of this silver anniversary was the creation of a new list. Participants read from lists first created in 1966, when BBYA established both its name and its affiliation, to books recognized by the 1992 committee. (Those of you mathematically inclined who realize these numbers don't compute should note that the disparity in years and number of lists come from a break in naming the lists in 1989. At that time the list was renamed "Best Books for Young Adults — 1990" to conform to the standard set by the Newbery-Caldecott Awards. The 1990 list consists of books published in 1989, but designated BBYA in 1990. For succeeding lists, the date indicates the year the list is issued and includes books published the previous year.)

This preconference instituted one notable change from previous procedures. In the past, discussion groups divided into historical periods, with each group responsible for covering those books published during a particular time span. While this system allowed participants to judge books within their historical contexts, it also added a particular burden to each committee. Each focus group wanted to be sure that enduring authors, such as Robert Cormier, S.E. Hinton, Richard Peck, and Paul Zindel would be represented, but, with the secrecy surrounding the deliberations, didn't know if other groups would recognize them in their designated publishing years.

Consequently, in the 1988 list, for example, eight authors (Alice Childress, Robert Cormier, Chris Crutcher, Rosa Guy, M.E. Kerr, Richard Peck, William Sleator, and Paul Zindel) were represented with two entries, while S.E. Hinton received three (The Outsiders; That Was Then, This is Now; and Tex) and Cynthia Voigt nabbed four (Homecoming; Izzy Willy-Nilly; The Runner; and A Solitary Blue). There was no inherent problem with repeatedly recognizing these authors on one list, but participants nonetheless voiced their dilemmas with having to consider each in a vacuum.

In order to eliminate that problem, the 1994 deliberations focused not on years of publication but rather on authors. There were ten separate groups formed, with each group responsible for covering those books published during a particular time span. While this system allowed participants to judge books within their historical contexts, it also added a particular burden to each committee. Each focus group wanted to be sure that enduring authors, such as Robert Cormier, S.E. Hinton, Richard Peck, and Paul Zindel would be represented, but, with the secrecy surrounding the deliberations, didn't know if other groups would recognize them in their designated publishing years.

Consequently, in the 1988 list, for example, eight authors (Alice Childress, Robert Cormier, Chris Crutcher, Rosa Guy, M.E. Kerr, Richard Peck, William Sleator, and Paul Zindel) were represented with two entries, while S.E. Hinton received three (The Outsiders; That Was Then, This is Now; and Tex) and Cynthia Voigt nabbed four (Homecoming; Izzy Willy-Nilly; The Runner; and A Solitary Blue). There was no inherent problem with repeatedly recognizing these authors on one list, but participants nonetheless voiced their dilemmas with having to consider each in a vacuum.

In order to eliminate that problem, the 1994 deliberations focused not on years of publication but rather on authors. There were ten separate groups formed, with each group responsible for those young adult authors whose surnames began with specific letters of the alphabet. For example, Group One, which in previous discussions would have examined books from 1966 to 1971, this time around considered authors with last names beginning with "A" and running through "Bredes." While groups were free to select more than one book per author, this time they did it by looking at a complete body of works rather than one or two isolated entries within a certain period.

Each of the ten groups, with approximately eight members to a group, selected ten books apiece, thus creating a "Best of the Best" list of 100 titles (Lynn McDermott's What's Happening to My Body?; A Growing Up Guide for Parents and Sons and What's Happening to My Body?; A Growing Up Guide for Parents and Daughters were counted as one title). From this list, five books (I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings; The Outsiders; The Bell Jar; Bless the Beasts and the Children; and Deathwatch) have appeared on all previous such lists. An even dozen of the selected books (Forever; Sex Education; The Outsiders; Carrie; China Boy; Alan and Naomi; The Contender; What's Happening to My Body? Book for Boys: A Growing Up Guide for Parents and Sons; Hatchet; The Color Purple; Blitzcat; and The Pigman) never appeared as Best Books. And only one author, last year's ALAN award recipient, Chris Crutcher, received recognition for more than one entry: Athletic Shorts and Stotan!.
What the list highlights is the diversity that we know of as young adult literature. Although novels comprise the greatest hunk of the selections, there's also poetry (American Sports Poems), short stories (Sixteen), graphic illustrations (Maus), exposés (And the Band Played On), remembrances (Shrapnel in the Heart), essays (American Heroes: In and Out of School), personal narratives (Boy), and advice (The New Teenage Body Book). Some books have endured for a quarter of a century (Run Softly, Go Fast) while others represent newer works (Prized Possessions). The list includes adult books for older readers (The Joy Luck Club) as well as books for middle schoolers (Probably Still Nick Swanson); books for realistic fiction fans (Scorpions), fantasy mavens (Eva), nonfiction addicts (Dealing with Dragons), social activists (There Are No Children Here), historical fiction enthusiasts (Ruby in the Smoke), romance lovers (Annie On My Mind), mystery buffs (Are You in the House Alone?), folklore fanciers (Beauty), adventure seekers (Interstellar Pig), sports fans (Vision Quest), horror devotees (The Silver Kiss), and those youngsters just looking for a good read. These “Best of the Best” titles are listed below.

An annotated list, complete with bibliographic information, appears in the October 15, 1994, issue of Booklist. That same issue also includes a column by Michael Cart reviewing his comments at the preconference, an interview with past and present BBYA consultants Barbara Duree and Sally Estes, and a book quiz based on the list. Individual brochures, complete with bibliographic information and annotations, are also available from ALA. To place an order, call 1-800-545-2433 and ask for the YALSA office.

**BEST OF THE BEST**

Adams, Douglas -- Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

Angelou, Maya -- I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Anonymous -- Go Ask Alice

Anthony, Piers -- On a Pale Horse

Avi -- Nothing But the Truth

Baldwin, James -- If Beale Street Could Talk

Barlow, Wayne Douglas, and Ian Summers -- Barlow's Guide to Extraterrestrials

Block, Francesca Lia -- Weetzie Bat

Blume, Judy -- Forever

Boston Woman's Health Book Collective -- Our Bodies, Ourselves

Bridgers, Sue Ellen -- Permanent Connections

Brooks, Bruce -- The Moves Make the Man

Cannon, A.E. -- Amazing Gracie

Card, Orson Scott -- Ender's Game

Carter, Alden R. -- Up Country

Childress, Alice -- Rainbow Jordan

Cole, Brock -- Goats

Corman, Avery -- Prized Possessions

Cormier, Robert -- We All Fall Down

Crew, Linda -- Children of the River

Crutcher, Chris -- Athletic Shorts

Crutcher, Chris -- Stotan!

Dahl, Roald -- Boy

Davis, Jenny -- Sex Education

Davis, Terry -- Vision Quest

Deuker, Carl -- On the Devil's Court

Dickinson, Peter -- Eva

Duncan, Lois -- Killing Mr. Griffin

Fox, Paula -- One-Eyed Cat

Gaines, Ernest J. -- The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman

Gallo, Donald R., ed -- Sixteen

Garden, Nancy -- Annie on My Mind

Gies, Miep and Alison Leslie Gold -- Anne Frank Remembered

Goldman, Peter, and Tony Fuller -- Charlie Company

Grant, Cynthia D. -- Phoenix Rising

Greenberg, Joanne -- Of Such Small Differences

Guest, Judith -- Ordinary People

Guy, Rosa -- Friends
Hayden, Torey L. -- Ghost Girl
Hentoff, Nat -- American Heroes
Hinton, S.E. -- The Outsiders
Hobbs, Will -- Downriver
Holman, Felice -- Stake's Limbo
Hoover, H.M. -- Another Heaven, Another Earth
Houston, James -- Ghost Fox
Jacques, Brian -- Redwall
Jones, Diana Wynne -- Howl's Moving Castle
Kerr, M.E. -- Gentlemanners
Klass, David -- Wrestling with Honor
Klause, Annette Curtis -- Silver Kiss
Knudson, R.R., and May Swenson, eds. -- American Sports Poems
Koertge, Ron -- The Arizona Kid
Kotlowitz, Alex -- There Are No Children Here
Lee, Gus -- China Boy
Levoy, Myron -- Alan and Naomi
Lipsyte, Robert -- The Contender
Lopes, Sai, ed. -- Wall: Images and Offerings from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial
Mahy, Margaret -- The Changeover
Mazer, Harry, and Norma Fox Mazer -- The Solid Gold Kid
Mazer, Norma Fox -- Silver
McCaffrey, Anne -- Dragonsinger
McCoy, Kathy, and Charles Wibblesman -- The New Teenage Body Book
McKinley, Robin -- Beauty
Meriwether, Louise -- Daddy Was a Numbers Runner
Miller, Frances A. -- The Truth Trap
Murphy, Barbara Beasley, and Judie Wolcott -- Ace Hits the Big Time
Myers, Walter Dean -- Scorpions
O'Brien, Robert C. -- Z for Zachariah
Palmer, Laura -- Shrapnel in the Heart
Paterson, Katherine -- Jacob Have I Loved
Paulsen, Gary -- Hatchet
Peck, Richard -- Are You In the House Alone?
Pfeffer, Susan Beth -- The Year Without Michael
Pierce, Meredith Ann -- Darkangel
Plath, Sylvia -- The Bell Jar
Pullman, Philip -- Ruby in the Smoke
Rinaldi, Ann -- Wolf by the Ears
Rogasky, Barbara -- Smoke and Ashes
Salzman, Mark -- Iron and Silk
Scoppetone, Sandra -- Trying Hard to Hear You
References


