

*The EMIE BULLETIN is
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Dear EMIERT Friends,

EMIERT has much to celebrate as we approach ALA Annual 2008. Our membership continues to grow: We now have 56 institutional members and 642 personal members, an increase of 5.77 percent from last year. I am especially pleased to note that membership among library school students has increased by 10.42 percent to 106 members! It is very gratifying to know that EMIERT fills the needs of both established professionals and new colleagues. As always, your board and I are eager to hear about how we can make the Round Table more relevant to you.

By the time you read this issue, ALA Annual will be only a few weeks away. EMIERT has a full schedule for Annual this year and will be taking advantage of several opportunities to increase our visibility. We hope you will join us at one or more of the following events:

ALA Membership Pavilion; Saturday, June 28; EMIERT mini-presentation time TBA: Learn more about ways that membership can enhance your career, connect you with colleagues from around the world, and improve library services to your community. Contact Homa Naficy, naficy@hplct.org for additional information.

11th Annual Diversity and Outreach Fair; Saturday, June 28, 3–5 p.m.; EMIERT will host a table to promote our Round Table and publicize our 2008 Annual program. Organized by ALA's Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS) as a way to celebrate examples of diversity in American libraries, and to demonstrate possibilities for other libraries in search of "diversity in action" ideas, the fair is a great event and an opportunity for you to meet other librarians who will be showcasing the many diversity initiatives offered at their libraries. Tess Tobin will represent EMIERT at the fair and organize our table display. If you are interested in volunteering to assist Tess, contact her at tobinc@citytech.cuny.edu.

EMIERT General Membership Meeting and Program; Sunday, June 29, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.; Anaheim Convention Center 213 C: Our program **Eating Across Cultures: Food Is Culture** will highlight the exploration of culture through food. Sharing food has been a way for people of all cultures to sustain and create a mindful or emotional bond with others. Three noted speakers will discuss the importance of food among immigrant populations as they assimilate into new homes, retain their culinary heritage and foodways, and contribute to shaping new cuisines and culinary traditions. Food historian Robert W. Brower will present his current project, "Searching for Identity in Italian-American Community Cookbooks." Judy Bart Kancigor, author of *Cooking Jewish: 532 Great Recipes from the Rabinowitz Family*, will discuss the preservation of memories and traditions through food, along with the history and diversity of Jewish cuisine. Our third panelist, Charles Perry, food journalist, translator of *A Baghdad Cookery Book: The Book of Dishes*, a thirteenth-century compilation of recipes, and chair of the Culinary Historians of Southern California, will speak on "Five Centuries of Middle Eastern Food Influence in the Americas." A bibliography of multicultural children's literature on food-related topics, compiled by Doris Gebel and the Children's Services Committee, will be distributed. To cap off our exciting program, the winner of the EMIERT logo design contest will be announced and our new logo introduced.

New Member Round Table Student Reception, Sunday, June 29, 6:30–7:30 p.m.; Hyatt/Grand B: Representatives from EMIERT will present a short introduction to our Round Table and encourage our new colleagues to join and become active in our organization.

The ALA election results have arrived! Please join with me in congratulating our new officers: Treasurer—Gail Schlachter; Secretary—Rebecca Ann Stuhr; Member-at-Large (3)—Bessie Faye Gray-Knox, Janice F. Rosen, and Sarah Smith. A hearty thanks to each one of you for your many past contributions to EMIERT and your enthusiastic willingness to continue to serve capably and creatively!

I want to highlight the election of Plummer Alston (Al) Jones, Jr., to the office of EMIERT Representative to Council. Al holds the distinction of serving as our first Representative to Council. In 2008 EMIERT attained, for the first time in our history, a level of membership sufficient to gain us a seat on Council. I know that our new representative will be an articulate, thoughtful voice on behalf of EMIERT and always eager to learn about the issues of concern to us. Let us take advantage of Al's experience as an

educator and a leader in cultural diversity. And let us continue to grow our Round Table so we can sustain this level of organizational participation that we have worked so hard to achieve.

One final reminder—Homa Naficy and Ana Matosian request that members submit a favorite family recipe that best tells a story of their ethnic heritage. Send your contributions by email to naficy@hplct.org or amatosian@yahoo.com.

Respectfully,

Myra Appel
Chair, Ethnic & Multicultural Information
Exchange Round Table

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EMIERT thanks AnacondaBooks.com for their very generous contribution to our first annual fundraiser. AnacondaBooks.com offers the library community a new concept in acquiring books and serials published in Mexico. AnacondaBooks.com, a consortium of large, established publishers and small, independent publishing houses from the private and public sectors, will launch their service on July 1, 2008. Structured to meet the needs of both public and academic libraries, AnacondaBooks.com will offer its customers the same retail prices charged in Mexico and converted into U.S. dollars; consolidation of orders among publishers with only one shipping fee charged; competitive shipping rates; and the ability to pay with major credit cards and PayPal. AnacondaBooks.com will handle in-print scholarly and popular publications, including research publications, children's literature, Spanish-language translations of English-language imprints, periodicals, and media distributed by book publishers. A trilingual web page, AnacondaBooks.com, will list all subject areas and levels of readership to facilitate browsing or targeted searching. The AnacondaBooks.com office staff, based in California, will be available to provide phone and email assistance in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Contact Beverly Joy-Karno at info@AnacondaBooks.com for more information.

Libraries for the Future:

Progress, Development and Partnerships

World Library and Information Congress:
73rd IFLA General Conference and Council
Durban, South Africa, August 19-23, 2007

by Tess Tobin

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As the newly appointed EMIERT member of IFLA's Standing Committee Library Services to Multicultural Populations, I attended the IFLA annual conference last summer in Durban, South Africa. The conference attracted over 3,000 delegates, volunteers, and exhibitors from 118 countries, including over 1,600 delegates from the African continent. This was an uplifting and stimulating experience for all attendees, since it gave a voice to all the wonderful programs that are taking place throughout Africa, and especially in South Africa. This is a daunting task for a country that has only had a democratic government since 1994. South Africa is still feeling the effects of apartheid; nevertheless, new libraries are being constructed, new partnerships are being formed, and progress is being made.

At the opening session, I was very moved by the keynote address of Justice Albie Sachs, a member of the Constitutional Court of South Africa. A human rights activist and a member of the Constitutional Committee and the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress, Justice Sachs

took an active part in the negotiations that led to South Africa becoming a constitutional democracy. He recounted his time spent in prison in solitary confinement and how having books to read helped to carry him through this terrible period of his life. Since my return home, I am reading the novels of Mark Mathabane who writes about his experiences growing up in Black South Africa and attending school under the government-imposed Bantu Education Act, which enforced the separation of races in all educational systems, further marginalizing Black communities.

I attended many of the sessions. One that I really enjoyed was *Multilingual Library Services to Multilingual Families*. The keynote speaker, Kathleen Heugh, Ph.D., from the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa, presented her research on the importance of the mother tongue in children's cognitive development and success in learning. Eleven official languages are recognized in the constitution of South Africa, so getting materials in all these languages is cost prohibitive. Nonetheless, great strides are being made to support publishers of these multilingual materials.

I learned more about the Multicultural Manifesto, a document written by members of the Library Services to Multicultural Populations Standing Committee. The manifesto, which emphasizes the important role of libraries in a culturally and linguistically diverse society, was adopted at the IFLA conference in Seoul and is awaiting approval from UNESCO. More about the Multicultural Manifesto will appear in a future *EMIE Bulletin*. The Standing Committee has also been successful in getting other IFLA sections to embrace the challenge of reaching out to serve all people in their community, as evidenced in some of the collaborative programs in Durban.

This summer IFLA will be right next door in Canada. Multicultural to Intercultural: Libraries Connecting Communities (www.ifla.org/VII/s32/conf/s32-satellite2008.htm) is the theme for the Library Services to Multicultural Populations Satellite Meeting, to be held August 5-7, 2008 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Vancouver is one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world, and this conference will explore models of library practice in different multicultural environments, including the needs of First Nations/Indigenous peoples. The 74th IFLA World Library and Information Congress will take place the following week, August 10-14, 2008, in Québec City, Canada. This year's conference theme is *Library Without Borders: Navigating Towards Global Understanding*.

Multicultural Children's Literature: A Selected Bibliography

Karma Waltonen

I had the pleasure of teaching the course Multicultural Children's Literature at American River College before the class was recently retooled. Teaching it gave me the opportunity to revisit some old favorites and to think through how literature may be used to teach children, as most of my students were teachers themselves.

The texts we consider "multicultural" all seem to belong to the children's literary movement called new realism. Judy Blume is the foremother and quintessential example. New realism is popular with audiences, who tend to respond to texts that portray real issues (divorce, teenage sexuality, and so on). New realism often features imperfect parents, non-saccharine endings, and children who disobey authority without necessarily being wrong or punished. For these reasons, many parents continue to object to these texts.

Below is a selection of some of the texts I have used; the list is incomplete but a good place to start.

Anaya, Rudolfo. *Bless Me, Ultima*. 1972. In 1940s New Mexico, six-year-old Antonio Márez meets a *curandera* (healer) named Ultima. Antonio must distinguish between the Catholic faith in which he is raised and the earthy spirituality Ultima represents. His family is endangered when they take her in; the custom of the witch-hunt is well known in the community. Antonio must also contend with his brother, who has returned from the war aimless and who is found at one point in a house of ill repute. Our protagonist sees death and life and learns, "You must understand that when anybody, bruja or curandera, priest or sinner, tampers with the fate of a man that sometimes a chain of events is set into motion over which no one will have ultimate control. You must be willing to accept this responsibility" (85).

Erdrich, Louise. *The Game of Silence*. 2005. This sequel to *The Birchbark House* is about the Anishinaabe Nation (also known as Ojibway and Chippewa) in the 1840s. Our protagonist, Omakayas, watches her tribe go through many trials, as they struggle with smallpox, White people encroaching on their land and beliefs, and the natural challenges of winter. The novel ends with the tribe leaving their sacred land. Among other things, the novel shows that many tribes did not adhere to White hegemonic gender ideals of the period.

Garden, Nancy. *Annie on My Mind*. 1982. This was one of the first books to explore homosexuality among high school students. Liza attends Foster Academy, and the book chronicles the experiences of her senior year, alternating between first and third person. She meets Annie; they become fast friends; they become more than friends. When Liza is trusted to house-sit her teachers' house, she discovers classic works of lesbian sexuality and empowerment. Another teacher catches Annie in the house, which precipitates a move to expel Liza and to fire the teachers who own the house. This is a

thoughtful portrayal of the issues surrounding sexuality and teenagers. What is the moral responsibility of teachers? Of parents? How do we deal with teenagers experimenting with sexuality, whether homosexual or heterosexual? How do we best care for teenagers who become pregnant, as happens to another Academy girl?

Highwater, Jamake. *Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey*. 1997. This epic attempts to integrate the mythology of several Indian nations into one man's hero journey. It is a complex tale of gods and the coming of the White man. It is useful for exploring etiological tales. Essentialist in viewpoint, this text was the least appreciated by my students.

Kadohata, Cynthia. *Kira-kira*. 2004. Katie learns much when her Japanese-American family moves to the Deep South after World War II. Life is further complicated when her younger sister is diagnosed with terminal cancer. The community is unsure how to treat them—should they be segregated in a world that only understands black and white? Katie moves into adulthood when she realizes that her personal pain is not the only pain in the world. A Newbery winner.

Le Guin, Ursula K. *Gifts*. 2004. As the world of science fiction and fantasy is often colorless, the genre is overlooked when seeking multicultural texts. Yet the way in which different worlds and tribes interact in these books can be useful to understand how we interact. This is the provocative story of a boy whose father convinces him that because of his mental abilities, he must wear a blindfold for life; the boy comes to understand that his father effectively blinded him merely to intimidate others. This is a moving story of power and communities.

Ortiz Cofer, Judith. *The Meaning of Consuelo*. 2003. Set in 1950s Puerto Rico, this novel tells the story of Consuelo, a girl torn between her father and mother and what they stand for: modernization/Americanization and tradition, respectively. This is a superb resource for people who want to familiarize themselves with our closest colony. The novel delves into many historical moments worth exploring—Consuelo's grandparents died in the great influenza; her father served in the U.S. military in World War II; and her family endured Operation Bootstrap, when English became the "official" language in Puerto Rico's schools. The nationalist movement in Puerto Rico is still with us, although the 2003 census indicates that there are more Puerto Ricans on the mainland than on the island. The often tense relationship between men and women in the 1950s is shown clearly. As our narrator explains, "When a man breaks something in anger, the next thing he grabs may be one of your limbs; we had heard that said by women in our own house" (58). Religion, class, race, and menstruation are among the other issues explored.

Osa, Nancy. *Cuba 15*. 2003. This book explores our heroine's reaction to her Quinceañera celebration. Her mother's plans for the party in Chicago force her to think about her Hispanic heritage. Although she is surrounded by her Cuban exile family and tries to learn about Cuba, they (especially her father) don't really talk about it. This is more a discussion of how important communication between generations is.

Pitts, Paul. *Racing the Sun*. 1988. In his introduction, Pitts has to explain that he's writing about Native Americans from the position of a White man—a White man who lives and teaches on a reservation. Our narrator is a founding member of the Underachieving Goof-Offs of America. When his grandfather comes to live with the family, he and his father must confront their Native American roots. The narrator comes to understand the value of storytelling, of rising with the sun, of his grandfather, and of occasional disobedience.

Soto, Gary. *Buried Onions*. 1997. Eddie lives in Fresno (where Soto grew up). His is a story of trying to survive poor in contemporary California. The constrictions and violence of his life lead him to join the Navy to escape—fertile ground for discussions of happy endings. Best for high school age and above.

Staples, Suzanne Fisher. *Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind*. 1989. This novel is set in the contemporary Pakistan desert, though the culture is centuries old. Shabanu is happy living in the family tents. Life becomes complicated when a local warlord kills her older sister's fiancé. Shabanu must marry a leader who has demanded her in order to bring peace to the family. As this is not a Disney story, she is not liberated by feminist ideals. The realistic, disturbing ending leads the reader to the sequels, which are also engaging.

Taylor, Mildred P. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. 1976. The series of books about the life of Cassie and her community is impressive in quality and scope. *Roll of Thunder* won the Newbery. The joys and dangers (including lynching) of life as a Black child in the South during the first part of the twentieth century are portrayed in detail. Cassie is an enjoyable character to see the world through—she's an eavesdropper, a troublemaker, and a tomboy. Her friendships and family relationships are complex and fascinating. The book is useful in teaching segregation and Southern history.

Yep, Lawrence. *Dragonwings*. 1975. *Dragonwings* is Yep's most revered entry in his series on the Chinese-American experience. Each book features a specific time period and gives a powerful history, useful in discussing China and (usually) California. *Dragonwings* starts in 1903. The protagonist's father lives in Golden Mountain (what the Chinese called California) and brings his son over; however, women are not allowed to immigrate. Father and son survive the San Francisco earthquake and the racism of early twentieth century America. The father becomes obsessed with flight, and the son is upset because it detracts from the efforts necessary to smuggle his mother into the United States. The dangerous realities of the time, including opium addiction, are not glossed over. Yep also has a dramatic version of the text.

Professor Karma Waltonen is an instructor with the Department of English and University Writing Program at the University of California, Davis. She is the current president of the Margaret Atwood Society and will likely hand you an Atwood book if you express even a polite interest. In addition to her research on literature, rhetoric, and composition, Waltonen also writes poetry, fiction, plays, and jokes for her stand-up routines. ☺