



**AFAS: African American Studies Librarians Section**  
Association of College and Research Libraries - ALA

## **AFAS NEWSLETTER**

Vol. 8, No. 1 (Summer 2000)

ISSN 1076-8955

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### **Greetings from the Chair**

Dear AFAS Members,

Serving as your chair for the year 2000 has been an exciting challenge for me. I hope that we continue to be strong contenders in the struggle to stay informed and abreast of the progresses made to librarianship and information science/technology as it relates to African American Studies Collections. Most of all I hope that our revision of the AFAS Web site and newsletter will strengthen our ability to meet the challenges of ALA, ACRL, librarianship and collection developments relating to African American Studies. It is my hope that our 2000 annual program will generate stronger connections to other ethnic librarian groups' and associations as well as give us greater visibility to ALA, ACRL, and most of all other potential AFAS members.

I hope that we attract many new AFAS members and encourage current members to continue to make this section a vibrant, productive, and progressive part of ACRL. We can truly move into this new millennium with renewed courage to meet our future challenges. We are poised to help our new chair-elect, Dorothy Washington fulfill her agenda and take our place as one of ACRL's productive and progressive sections. Thank you, AFAS members for your time and effort given to help make my term productive and successful, see you in Chicago!!!!!!

**Mary G. Wrighten**

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee met on Saturday, January 15, 2000, 9:30-11:00 a.m at the Menger Hotel Cavalier Room in San Antonio, Texas. Members present at the meeting included: Kathleen Bethel, Raquel Cogell, Sylverna Ford, Bennie Robinson, Carol

Rudisell, Dorothy Washington, Mary Wrighten, and Barbara Jenkins (ACRL Liaison). Sylverna Ford called the meeting to order, presented the agenda, and called for the reading of the minutes. The minutes were approved with minor corrections. The Committee approved the agenda for the membership meeting. Committee reports, were discussed, then the Executive Committee undertook new business items regarding the AFAS-L discussion list, the disposition of the AFAS archives, and the African American Funnel Project.

Dorothy Washington gave an update on the African American Funnel Project, whose purpose is to look at ways of improving access to African Americana in library catalogs. A survey was conducted in the fall of 1999. While AFAS should play a leading role in this effort, this project is much larger than AFAS and needs the support of public libraries, special libraries, and librarians,--catalogers as well as public service librarians. Washington reported that support for the project had been received from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (NYPL), the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center (Howard University) and Clark-Atlanta University. The Executive Committee recommended that Dorothy Washington establish a discussion group to address the Funnel Project and related issues, such as descriptive cataloging, name authority, content notes, etc.

The Committee noted that AFAS does not have a permanent archive, and discussed possible locations for its permanent records. Suggestions included (1) a library school, e.g., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; (2) an African American archive; or (3) a combination of the two, an African American library school. A question was raised about ACRL's archives, and whether AFAS would want to separate its records from theirs. Barbara Jenkins, ACRL-Liaison, will speak to the ACRL Board and get back to Mary Wrighten. If ACRL does not have a policy, the Executive Committee will inquire if institutions are interested. It was noted that the Archivists and Archives of Color of the Society of American Archivists have their archives at Howard University.

The last item on the Executive Committee agenda was announcements. Kathleen Bethel announced a trip to Africa for Zimbabwe's Book Fair and an excursion to South Africa that would focus on libraries. She is in the process of getting proposals from travel agencies and is open to suggestions of additional travel agencies. The trip is likely to be in 2002 and will be announced later this year.

### **Conference Program Planning--Chicago 2000 Committee**

The program planned for ALA Annual will be a 90-minute panel discussion about future challenges for ethnic and cultural academic collections. Moderated by Kathleen Bethel, the panel will include representatives from the ALA's ethnic caucuses. The program will be Saturday, July 8, 2000, beginning at 2:00 p.m., followed by the AFAS Membership meeting at 3:30. See Conference News for additional details.

### **Nominating Committee**

The Committee began its work following the Mid-Winter Conference and developed a full slate of candidates. The slate included Louveller M. Lester and Carol A. Rudisell for Vice-Chairperson/Chairperson-Elect; Audrey J. Taylor for Secretary; and Heather Martin and Duryea H. Callaway for Member-at-Large. We thank all of the candidates for their

support of the Section and offer congratulations to the newly-elected officers who are Carol A. Rudisell (Vice-Chairperson/Chairperson-Elect), Audrey J. Taylor (Secretary), and Heather Martin (Member-at-Large).

### **Policy and Research Committee**

The Section needs to determine whether ACRL Board approval is required to issue an award for best reference sources. Until such a determination is made, the Research and Policy Committee will not evaluate additional reference titles.

### **Publications Committee**

Raquel Cogell is updating the AFAS web site. The web site, which is currently based at Kent State University, will migrate to the ALA Web server. In the interim period, the site will be based at Emory University. AFAS members will have the opportunity to view the updated site before it becomes official. Plans are also underway for an electronic version of the newsletter. A print version of the newsletter will continue to be published, with the hopes of eventually phasing it out. The committee is planning to include reviews of books, CD-ROM products, Web sites, and is also interested in any additional article ideas from the membership.

### **AFAS-L Discussion List**

There is a concern about posting some messages to AFAS-L (messages that pertain to official AFAS business) because membership to the list is not limited to AFAS members. Mary Wrighten will inquire with Gladys Smiley Bell as to the feasibility of setting up a list of just AFAS members. Therefore, in addition to AFAS-L Discussion, AFAS-L Executive, and AFAS-L Moderators, there would also be an AFAS-L Membership list. Also, not all members of the AFAS Executive Committee are subscribed to the AFAS-L Executive list.

### **Discussion Group for Cataloging Issues**

The AFAS Executive Committee, in its meeting on January 15, 2000, voted to establish a Discussion Group for Cataloging Issues. Dorothy Washington will organize the group, and as Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect of AFAS, she will appoint a chair of the Discussion Group. Participation in the group is open to anyone interested in improving access to African American resources. The AFAS membership, at its general meeting on January 15, 2000, accepted the Executive Board's suggestion to create the discussion group. An initial focus of the group is an African American Funnel Project which is being conducted in collaboration with the Library of Congress. Participants in the group will be able to suggest, revise or create headings relating to the African American experience. Participation is not restricted to catalogers nor ALA, ACRL, or AFAS members. The Library of Congress has agreed to provide training sessions toward such activity. A basic session on the Library of Congress Subject Headings is planned for ALA Annual Conference 2000 in Chicago. For more information on the SACO workshops visit the [Program for Cooperative Cataloging \(PCC\)](http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/pcc/sacoworkshops.html) website at: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/pcc/sacoworkshops.html>. The first meeting of the Discussion Group for Cataloging Issues will take place at the ALA 2000 Annual Conference on Saturday, July 8 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. the in Hilton Chicago & Towers - Private Dining Room 4. For further

information on this very exciting and dynamic project, contact Dorothy Ann Washington, 1100 3rd Street, West Lafayette, IN, 47906 or email at dawashington@hfs.purdue.edu.

## **Conference News**

### **AFAS Program at ALA in Chicago**

The African American Studies Librarians Section along with co-sponsors Women's Studies Section (ACRL), Asian, African, and Middle Eastern Section (ACRL), and the Black Caucus of the American Library Association are pleased to present:

"Future Challenges for Ethnic and Cultural Academic Collections"

Time and Place:

Saturday, July 8, 2000  
2:00 to 4:00 P.M.

Lake Michigan Room  
Hilton Chicago & Towers

How is a core collection defined for an academic ethnic or cultural collection? How should we preserve out-of-print and historical materials? Should these collections be integrated or segregated from the consortium collections? What role should ethnic and cultural academic collections play in the future? Panel members representing collections and library services to Spanish Speaking (REFORMA), African American (AFAS), American Indian (AILA) and Chinese-American (CALA) will be the focus. This 90-minute program will seek tentative answers to these questions and more. The African American Studies Librarians Section General Membership meeting will begin at 3:30 P.M.

Moderator: Kathleen E. Bethel, African American Studies Librarian, Northwestern University

#### **Speakers:**

Lillian Castillo-Speed, Head, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California at Berkeley also

Member, REFORMA (National Association to Promote Library Services to the Spanish Speaking)

Lisa Pillow, Director, Black Studies Library, Ohio State University also

Member, African American Studies Librarian Section, ACRL

John D. Berry, Assistant Director, Graduate College, Oklahoma State University also

Member, American Indian Library Association

Dr. Ling Hwey Jeng, Associate Professor, School of Library &

Information Science, University of Kentucky also

Member, Chinese-American Library Association

**Other AFAS Meetings at ALA in Chicago**

Saturday, July 8, 2000  
Chicago Hilton & Towers

<b>Time</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Location</b>
8:30 - 9:30am	Standing Committee Meeting	PDR 3
9:30 - 11:00am	Executive Board Meeting	PDR 3
10:30 - 12:30 pm	Cataloging Issues Disc. Group	PDR 4
3:30 - 4:30pm	General Membership Meeting	Lake Michigan

### **Diversity Fair at Annual Conference**

The 2000 Diversity Fair at the Annual Conference of the American Library has been scheduled for Saturday, July 8, 2000, from 3:00PM to 5:00 PM, in Chicago, IL. The fair, sponsored by the Advisory Committee of the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services, provides opportunities for ALA members from all types of libraries to celebrate examples of diversity in America's libraries, and to demonstrate possibilities for other libraries in search of "diversity in action" ideas. Selected applicants will share their diversity initiatives in face-to-face presentations with conferees, utilizing a poster session/table talk format. The theme for 2000 supports that of ALA President Sarah Long, "LibrariesBuild Community: Partnerships to Support Diversity." "This year's Diversity Fair theme," says Long, "carries diversity in libraries to another level. It is inclusive of the community's resources, and also includes the involvement the members of the community being served. We know that libraries across the country are collaborating with their community partners to provide quality information services to all its citizens. The 2000 Diversity Fair provides an opportunity for these initiatives to be showcased."

### **AFAS Program at the ACRL 10th National Conference, Denver, Colorado, March 15-18, 2001**

For the ACRL 10th National Conference on Crossing the Divide, AFAS is preparing a program entitled "eBlack Studies, Bridging the Digital Divide: Academic Excellence and Social Responsibility." As part of the program tracks on Collections, and Partnerships & Collaborations, the AFAS program will explore the ways in which information technology and cyberspace can transform Black Studies. Dr. Abdul Alkalimat at the University of Toledo has agreed to be a program participant, as have Elaine Westbrooks, Gladys Smiley-Bell, and Thomas Weissinger.

### **AFASers in the News**

**Gladys Smiley Bell**, formerly at Kent State University, is now Assistant Director of Public Services, Harvey Library, Hampton University.

**Kathleen E. Bethel** of Northwestern University, was elected to ALA Council for the 2000-2003 term.

The recently published tenth edition of *Magazines for Libraries* (New Providence, NJ: Bowker, 2000) features sections on "Africa," authored by **Sylvia Y. Curtis** of the University of California, Santa Barbara, and "Afro-American," authored by **Kathleen E. Bethel** of Northwestern University.

**Arglenda Friday**, formerly of San Jose State University is now Director of the African-American Research Library & Cultural Center of the Broward County Library.

**Itibari M. Zulu**, Center for African-American Studies Library at the University of California, Los Angeles, serves as the African/African-American Studies Editor of the *MultiCultural Review*.

**Please send us news of your professional activities, so that it may be included in the next issue of the AFAS Newsletter. You may direct it to the Newsletter Editor at [rudisell@udel.edu](mailto:rudisell@udel.edu).**

## Internet Reviews

### **eBlack Studies**

<http://www.eblackstudies.net>

Edited by Dr. Abdul Alkalimat, University of Toledo, eBlack Studies serves as a gateway to Internet resources related to Black Studies. Comprised of three major components: "The BRAIN Project" (Black Research Archive on the Internet) which when completed will provide access to digitized Black intellectual history; "eBlack Resources" which provides links to existing Web sites that promote academic scholarship in Black Studies; and "Papers, Presentations" which is designed to present materials that "advocate eBlack Studies and provide examples of the new forms of Internet based scholarship." Two of the three sections are still in their early stages of development: "Papers, Presentations" has only one unpublished paper authored by Dr. Alkalimat, and "The BRAIN Project" supports only the all-too-familiar "under construction" note. On the other hand, the "eBlack Resources" section is well-developed and provides access to university programs, scholarly organizations and institutions including libraries, museums and archives, electronic journals and texts and electronic discussion lists. "eBlack Resources" provides a logical presentation of e-resources and some sections, such as e-journals, has a comprehensive listing of sites. The web site would be significantly enhanced by the addition of brief annotations, along with web addresses. The individual pages within the "eBlack Resources" section lack navigational bars or icons, and don't provide key information on copyright, webmaster address, or date of last update. These last elements have become standard in Web page design and would significantly enhance the utility of this Web site.

## Other News

When visiting Chicago, check out these two sites which have been instrumental in preserving and promoting African American historical and literary scholarship!

## **DuSable Museum of African American History**

<http://www.dusablemuseum.org>

The DuSable Museum is "the only major independent institution in Chicago established to preserve and interpret the historical experiences and achievements of African-Americans." Their web site provides the museum's hours, directions to the museum, and their current programs which includes the following exhibition which is on display until July 26, 2000:

**Last Mile of the Way: African American Homegoing Traditions, 1890-Present**  
"This exhibition depicts the many celebratory traditions or "Africanisms" that African Americans reenact during funerals and mourning periods. Customs whose origins derive from the traditions of Africans who came to American shores in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are portrayed in illustrations, photographs, artifacts and reproductions of funeral and mourning ceremonies." Arranged by the South Carolina State museum, the exhibition portrays the ways in which "homegoing" is handled by African-American communities. A special addition to the exhibition: "50 Years of Chicago's African American Homegoing Tradition and history" which is presented by the DuSable Museum in collaboration with Chicago's African American Funeral Directors.

For additional information on the exhibition and the Du Sable Museum, contact The DuSable Museum of African-American History, 740 East 56th Place, Chicago, Illinois 60637-1495, Phone: 773-947-0600.

## **The Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature**

Carter G. Woodson Regional Library, Chicago Public Library  
<http://www.chipublib.org/002branches/woodson/wvharsh.html>

"Vivian Harsh (1890-1960), the first Black librarian in the Chicago Public Library system, was named head of the George Cleveland Hall branch in 1932. She immediately began establishing a "Special Negro Collection" which became an integral part of the branch's community service. While developing this collection as a research and programming center for Chicago's community of Black scholars and activists, Harsh won the support and assistance of such leaders and writers as Richard Wright, Arna Bontemps, Langston Hughes and Horace Cayton."

For additional information on the Harsh Collection, contact the Woodson Regional Library, 9525 S. Halsted Street, Chicago, Illinois 60628, Phone: 312- 747-6900.

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*Last modified: 07/20/00*