

A F A S Newsletter

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J A M B O from the C H A I R

One of my major concerns with regards to the Afro-American Studies Librarians Section (AFAS) of ACRL is that it continue to grow in number, strength and influence over the next few years. Too much progress has been made in this area through the leadership of Clarence Chisholm, Stanton Biddle, Doris Clack, William Welburn and others, but we are far from finished. This growth will undoubtedly ensure the survival of both the organization and African American librarianship, if only our membership will truly be committed to working toward the goal of AFAS.

At the ACRL 7th National Conference in Pittsburgh, I recently received an unexpected "jolt in the arm." Although the number of African American librarians attending the conference was small, the majority of these librarians attending the conference are active in AFAS or are regular contributors/subscribers to the AFAS-L e-conference.

The AFAS program on "Digitizing African American Resources for Electronic Access" was informative and well attended. The audience, which numbered approximately 75 people, found much of interest in the presentation and added additional thoughts on the subject. Under the program chairmanship of Birdie Weir, the three program presenters Gladys Smiley Bell, Sylvia Curtis and Itibari Zulu, emphasized important issues on this complex topic. Stanton Biddle provided an eloquent summation of the presentations which provided "food for thought." It is this type of commitment that encourages me to think that this section will survive.

In a recent mailing from the ACRL office, I received address labels for 266 AFAS members. I am happy that our membership is out there encouraging others to join us and share their ideas. Although we are growing in number, this is simply not enough. We must continue to communicate with one another to share information and aid the organization in establishing some guidelines in the discipline that will accentuate our credibility throughout the profession.

I sincerely appreciate your hard work and the support you exhibited during my term as chair of AFAS and ask that you continue to make AFAS a growing, productive member of our craft.

Michael Walker, Virginia Commonwealth University, AFAS Chair

Executive Committee:

Michael Walker, Chair
Virginia Commonwealth Univ.

Gladys Smiley Bell, Chair-Elect
Kent State Univ.

Mary Wrighten, Secretary
Bowling Green State Univ.

William Welburn, Past-Chair
Univ. of Iowa

Gloria Mims, Member-at-Large
Auburn Avenue Research Library

Itibari Zulu, Member-at-Large
Univ. of California, Los Angeles

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

Indexing Project *Mary Wrighten, Chair* *Bowling Green State University*

Many of those present at the Indexing Project meeting at ALA midwinter were new members and the discussion focus was updating them on the activities of the committee. Agenda items were not completed during the scheduled meeting time. Two of those items were to develop a timeline and create the details for selecting indexes to include in the project. After midwinter, the items were discussed and worked by Kathleen Bethel, Doris Clack, Marie Wright and Mary Wrighten. The results are the creation of a current body of literature and identification of the periodicals currently published by African Americans on the African American experience.--MW

Membership *Rochelle Ballard, Chair* *University of Central Florida*

Total AFAS membership increased to 266; 244 personal, 22 organizational. *Reported by Gladys Smiley Bell*

Nominating *Gerald Holmes, Chair* *University of Cincinnati*

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!!! Ballots will be out soon. For the term of office, to begin in the summer of 1996, for candidates for vice-chair / chair-elect, secretary and member-at-large (two) of AFAS, nominations are now being accepted by the incoming Nominating Committee Chair, **E. Gail Reese**, Assistant Director for Information Resources, Case Western Reserve University, 10900 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44106-7151, E-MAIL: egr@po.cwru.edu --GH

Publications *Gladys Smiley Bell, Chair* *Kent State University*

AFAS-L the section's e-conference is looking for two moderators. Anyone interested in learning how listserv's "work" should contact gbell@kentvm.kent.edu at your earliest convenience. All you need is an e-mail account and a desire to learn more about the Internet.--GSB

Other Committees of AFAS:

Constitution and By-Laws

Kathleen Bethel, Chair
Northwestern University

Policy and Research

Mark McManus, Chair
West Georgia College

Please note: In order to serve on ACRL section committees, appointees must be members of ACRL and the section. No member of ALA may serve simultaneously on more than three committees, including division and section committees, unless membership is ex officio. ALA members of committees are to attend the meetings of the committee during the Midwinter meetings and Annual Conferences. Failure to attend two consecutive meetings or groups of meetings (defined as all meetings of a committee that take place at one Midwinter or Annual Conference) without an explanation acceptable to the committee chair constitutes grounds for removal upon request by the chair and approval of the appropriate appointing official or governing board. The association does not provide funds for committee members to attend Midwinter meetings nor Annual Conferences. The usual term of appointment is two years, beginning at the end of Annual Conference with a possibility of reappointment for another two years.

If anyone is interested in participating on AFAS committees, please do not hesitate to contact:

Gladys Smiley Bell, Chair Elect of AFAS
Kent State University Libraries
Room 161, Library Building
Kent, Ohio 44242
216-672-3045 (voice)
216-672-3964 (fax)
E-MAIL: gbell@kentvm.kent.edu

ASSOCIATION OF
COLLEGE
& RESEARCH
LIBRARIES

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AFAS in Philadelphia

There was no action items taken during the Saturday, February 4, 1995 meeting, just committee reports given.

1. **Five Year Review.** This report has been completed, but has been put on hold due to ACRL's organizational restructuring.
2. **Nominating Committee.** The slate of candidates for the 1995 election has been submitted. There is a need to discuss and clarify the terms of the members at large candidates since one person's term has expired with no replacement.
3. **Constitution and Bylaws.** No report.
4. **Publications.** Has published and distributed Vol. 5, No. 1 (Fall 1994) issue of the *AFAS Newsletter* in print and electronic versions.
5. **Indexing Project.** Has met and discussed selecting indexes to be included in the project and creating a timeline for project completion.
6. **Policy and Research.** The committee is creating a manual for elected officers and committees of the section. This manual should include the history, bylaws, a list of committees and their charges, and a list of officers of the section. An ACRL and AFAS timeline should also be included. The committee is requesting a copy of all past and current minutes and programs to help construct an archives for the section and the history section for the manual.
7. **Chicago.** The program committee is working on co-sponsoring a program with the Asian, African, and Middle Eastern Section of ACRL AAMES featuring Deborah Mack, Director of the Fields Museum.
8. **Pittsburgh.** The program committee has planned for our section to be represented by a panel discussion on the republication of significant reference works and creating more bibliographic electronic resources in the area of African American Studies. The panel will include **Sylvia Curtis**, University of California, Santa Barbara, **Gladys Smiley Bell**, Kent State University, and **Itibari Zulu**, UCLA Center for African American Studies.--Reported by *Mary Wrighten*, AFAS Secretary

AFAS in Pittsburgh

Birdie Weir, Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical University, moderated the AFAS panel discussion, entitled "Digitizing African American Resources for Electronic Access." It was well attended. There were three panelists who presented three different approaches to the theme of how we as librarians dealing with the African and African American experience, make use of new and emerging electronic and computer technologies in our work. **Gladys Smiley Bell**, Kent State University, presented an overview of the technology by discussing the navigational tools available for finding these resources on the Internet via "the Smiley Page," her personal Web page. She illustrated how you can set up your own Web page to help you organize the resources on the Internet. She showed examples of several Home Pages related to African and African American Studies. These were examples of Web, Gopher, and FTP sites, all accessible via her home page. **Sylvia Curtis**, University of California, Santa Barbara, began by defining the Internet and providing a brief history of its beginning. She talked about how digitizing technology should be applied to major African and African American repositories and why. Reasons were primarily for the preservation of Black historical documentation and should include historic periodical, newspapers, contemporary texts and conversion from microfilm. She explained the advantages of Internet access IF there is technological access and compared with other electronic formats, i.e. CD-ROM. She concluded by suggesting types of works to be digitized and their potential components, i.e. text, images, audio, and numeric data. **Itibari Zulu**, UCLA Center for African American Studies, raised questions about what resources should be made available in digitized form and how the decisions are made. He talked about copyright and the control of the information and publishing in African and African American Studies. He stressed the need to review and evaluate electronic formats that exist and are forthcoming by neutral, objective bodies, and the need for criteria for this evaluation. Itibari ended by recommending that the community of African and African American resource centers work together to establish projects to preserve material electronically and establish criteria for access and distribution.--Reported by *Stanton Biddle*, Program Reactor

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Continued:

AFAS in Chicago

AFAS will co-sponsor a program with ACRL Asian, African, and Middle Eastern Section (AAMES), Anthropology and Sociology Section, International Relations Committee and ALCTS Committee on Cataloging Asian and African Materials, entitled "African at the Field Museum: Perspectives on the New Permanent Africa Exhibit," on Monday, June 26, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. In November 1993 the Field Museum of Natural History opened its new permanent Africa exhibit. The opening was preceded by several years of planning which included community involvement. Deborah L. Mack, senior developer of the exhibit, will discuss the new exhibit, its planning, its installation, and the response to it. This will be followed by an opportunity to view the exhibit. All attending the program should enter at the West Door to the Museum. The meeting will be held in Lecture Hall 1. Your conference badge is your museum admission. Attendance limited to 150. *Reported from the ALA Preliminary Program*

Tentative AFAS 1995 meeting schedule during the American Library Association Annual Conference:

Communication & Publications Committee

6/24 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Hyatt Hotel - Skyway 285

Constitution & Bylaws Committee

6/24 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Hyatt Hotel - Stetson Suite A

Executive Board Meeting

6/24 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Hyatt Hotel - McCormick

General Membership Meeting

6/26 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Marriott Hotel - Great America

Indexing Project Committee

6/24 8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Swissotel- Interlaken Suite

Membership Committee

6/24 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Hyatt Hotel - Skyway 284

Nominating (Elections) Committee

6/24 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Swissotel - Schaffhausen Suite

Policy & Research Committee

6/24 8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Swissotel - Villars Suite

Program Planning Committee, New York Annual Conference 1996

6/24 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Hilton Hotel - Conference 4H

All meetings are opened.

AFASers in the News

Carol Ritzen Kem, University of Florida, recently received her Ph.D., from the Department of Educational Leadership in the College of Education, University of Florida. She has also been elected first vice-president of the University of Florida chapter of the United Faculty of Florida (UFF), a faculty union in the state. She is also a member of the UFF state senate which sets policy for the entire statewide union.

Gerald Holmes, University of Cincinnati, will be presenting a poster session entitled, "The Career Search Treasure Hunt: A Collaborative Effort!" at the 1995 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. The presentation is number V-8, part of Poster Session V to be held on Monday, June 26th, from 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at the McCormick place Convention Center.

Gladys Smiley Bell, Kent State University, received the 1995 Scholarly Contribution Award for significant contributions to African American Librarianship and electronic information technology for diverse and underrepresented communities from Kent State University, April 1995, Kent, Ohio. She was also granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor at Kent State University.

Joseph Adkinson, III, UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, and **Itibari Zulu**, UCLA Center for African American Studies, will be part of a panel discussion entitled, "Electronic Resources in African American Studies," at the National Council for Black Studies, Inc., 19th Annual Conference, Oakland, California, May 31 - June 4, 1995. Their presentation is based on the idea that information is power, and thus its new electronic format challenges us to include an electronic dynamic to our understanding of African American Studies.

AFAS-FYI

On May 1st AFAS-L was three years old. The ACRL Afro American Studies Librarian Section is very pleased with the successful and valuable exchange of information the list has provided for its 600+ subscribers. For your information, here is a compiled statistical report on the use of AFAS-L.

Total number of users subscribed to the list to date: 602

This represents an increase of 111 subscribers since May 1, 1993.

Total number of countries represented: 10

This is an increase of 3 since reported last year; Netherlands, Great Britain, Japan and Denmark have been added, but Australia has dropped out. Please let me know if a country was missed, we have 7 nodes as "unknown."

Brazil:	1
Canada:	1
Denmark:	1
Great Britain:	3
India:	1
Japan:	1
Netherlands:	1
Spain:	2
USA:	570
Unknown:	7

Total number of distribution nodes on the list: 7

AFAS-DST@BROWNVN.BROWN.EDU (Brown *University* Local Distribution)

ARPALISTS+LISTSERV.AFAS-L@ANDREW.CMU.EDU (Andrew Message System*Carnegie Mellon University*)

B_AFASL_@TWU (TWU *Texas Woman's University* _Library Bulletin_Board)

CLEVNET@LIBRARY.CPL.ORG (Clevenet)

CMAA@DELPHI.COM (Christian Martial Arts Association)

HOFNEWS@HOFSTRA (Afas-lnews-feed *Hoftra University*)

NETNEWS@EVALUN11 (Netnews Server in Spain at Centro de Informatica - Universidad de Valencia)

NETNEWS@UICVM (Netnews Server at University of Illinois, Chicago)

ZAFASL@HYPATIA.TSL.TEXAS.GOV (Texas State Library)

This means that AFAS-L has a fair number of "subscribers" who are actually on campus re-distribution systems (several people sharing a single address), our numbers are therefore larger than our subscriber list.

Highest concentration of subscribers in the United States:

- West (California)
- Midwest (Ohio and Pennsylvania)
- East (New York and Washington, D. C.)
- South (Florida)

There are more than 90 non-academic nodes on the list (Commercial, Military, Government, Organization, etc., i.e. NET, US). What this means is that more and more individuals, public libraries and other interested parties are getting interconnected and joining our discussion; and this is exciting.

Total number of mail posted on the list since May 1, 1992: 2,932

This represents an increase of 1,004 postings a year ago.

Top three posters are:
FINGRAM@CHAR.VNET.NET,
AMCGEE@NETCOM.COM, and
Z115AA@TAMVM1.TAMU.EDU
Congratulations, you win!

Average posting or mail on AFAS-L per day: 3

Thanks for helping to make AFAS-L one of the best discussion groups on the Internet.

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA)

Many AFASers are also members of BCALA, a separate, but equal organization, which "serves as an advocate for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services and resources to the nation's African American community." (from BCALA mission statement) The BCALA celebrates 25 years of professional service to the library profession and the general public. Organized in 1970 at ALA's Midwinter Meeting in Chicago, Illinois, BCALA has facilitated remarkable changes with the library profession, promoting sensitivity to the needs of African American librarians and their communities. BCALA will host its 25th Anniversary Celebration with a gala fundraiser at the American Library Association's National Conference in Chicago, June 22-29, 1995. World-renowned jazz great Ramsey Lewis is the featured performer at the gala, a major fundraiser to endow \$100,000 for the E. J. Josey Scholarship Fund, which provides much needed scholarships for African American students pursuing the Master of Library Science degree.

BCALA Membership Meeting
Saturday, June 24
8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Palmer House - Red Lacquer Room

"Black Jewel of the Midwest: A Tour of the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and literature"
Sunday, June 25
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Carter G. Woodson Regional Library

BCALA 25th Anniversary Gala
Sunday, June 25
6:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
The "IN CROWD" with Ramsey Lewis
Winter Garden/Chicago Public Library's Harold Washington Center

Plan to attend and participate in the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the BCALA!!!

Schomburg Hosts Symposium on Africana Libraries in the Information Age

Advances in technology are having a profound impact on the ways in which information can be collected, preserved and made accessible, as well as how libraries will be defined and function in the 21 century. Within this context, the symposium, African Libraries in the Information Age was designed to address three primary goals: 1. To explore the feasibility of insuring that significant body of Africana related materials is included on the information superhighway; 2. To discuss the ways in which new technology has implications for collection development, access and preservation programs of Africana Libraries; and, 3. To explore ways in which major repositories of materials on the Africana experience can participate in the Information Age individually and collectively.

AFASers participating on panel discussions included Stanton Biddle, Baruch College, moderator for panel entitled, "Electronic Resources for Africana Studies;" Gladys Smiley Bell, Kent State University, "Navigating the Internet;" Kathleen Bethel, Northwestern University and Rosemary Stevenson, University of Illinois, Urbana, "Collaborative Efforts Among the Committee on Institutional Cooperation and Other Universities;" and Frederick Stielow, The Amistad Research Center, "Pioneering Collections on the Information Superhighway: The Amistad Research Center and Tulane University."

The symposium was part of the Schomburg Center's 10th annual weekend of spiritual renewal and celebration, Black Heritage Weekend 1995, January 27-28, 1995. In honor of her 80th birthday year, the weekend was dedicated to Mrs. Jean Blackwell Hutson, who served as curator of the Schomburg Center from 1948 to 1980. Under her leadership, the Center made great strides toward becoming a world-class research library. Her devoted struggle to perpetuate Arthur Schomburg's legacy led to the organization of major preservation initiatives.

**Dorothy Porter Wesley Forum & Lecture,
Moorland-Spingarn Research Center**

The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University held its annual Dorothy Porter Wesley Forum and Lecture on Friday, April 14, 1995 at the University. This free program series is sponsored annually by the Center and is usually held on the Friday of National Library Week. The 1995 program was a special tribute to Dorothy Porter Wesley.

Both the Forum and the Lecture were planned this year with the special guest speaker in mind. At the request of last year's Lecture audience, Dorothy Porter Wesley, the person for whom the series is named, presented the 1995 Lecture. Dorothy Porter Wesley, Curator Emerita of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, has made the closing remarks at previous programs. Her presentation for this special program was called "Once a Librarian, Always a Librarian" -- a title which is also her motto.

The Forum in conjunction with the Lecture was chaired by the Center's Director, Thomas Battle. It is entitled, "The Legacy of Dorothy Porter Wesley." The panelists were: Charles L. Blockson, Curator of the Charles L. Blockson Collection at Temple University in Philadelphia; Mohamed Mekkawi, Acting Director of Howard University Libraries; and Michael Winston, President of the Alfred Harcourt Foundation in Silver Spring.

Dorothy Porter Wesley, began her work as the librarian of the Moorland Foundation in 1930. Under her leadership the Foundation, and later the Moorland-Spingarn Collection, became a major repository of materials for the study of Black history and culture. During her career at Howard University that spanned forty-three years, she attracted numerous donors, developed the library and manuscript collections, and, most importantly, assisted scholars and researchers from all over the world. Last year, Dorothy Porter Wesley was one of the 1994 recipients of the Charles Frankel Prize in the Humanities, presented by President Bill Clinton, which honors Americans who have made outstanding contributions to the nation's cultural life.

Hiram Davis, Deputy Librarian of Congress, Library of Congress will be the 1996 lecturer.

Library Conferences and Dates

ALA Annual Conference

Chicago, IL June 22-29, 1995

New York City July 4-10, 1996

ALA Midwinter Meeting

San Antonio, TX Jan. 19-25, 1996

Washington, D. C. Feb. 14-20, 1997

BCALA, 3rd Annual Conference

Winston-Salem, NC 1997

IFLA Annual Conference

Istanbul, Turkey Aug. 22-26, 1995

Beijing, China Aug. 25-30, 1996

LITA/LAMA National Conference

Pittsburgh, PA Oct 13-16, 1996

National Library Week

April 14 - 16, 1996

