

# AFAS: AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES LIBRARIAN'S SECTION NEWSLETTER

*Association of College and Research Libraries and American Library Association*

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 1

SPRING 2004

ISSN 1076-8955

## GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR

Serving as your chair this year has been an exciting challenge for me. I am very impressed by the hard work of our officers, committee chairs, and members in positioning AFAS as an active contributor to ACRL and to African American Studies librarianship.

In the last issue of the AFAS newsletter, I set four priorities for AFAS in 2003-2004:

- \*Redesign the AFAS web site and improve content
- \*Revise the AFAS brochure
- \*Establish core lists for African American Studies books and journals
- \*Improve communications for smooth transitions as Chairs enter/leave office

I am very happy to report that we are on target with these initiatives! During the past year, the Publications Committee, chaired by Tiffeni Fontno, revamped the AFAS web site resulting in a new format and improved content including an archive of AFAS newsletters and current descriptions of AFAS committee charges. In addition, the committee also unveiled the new AFAS brochure at ALA Midwinter in San Diego.

Under the leadership of Lee LaFleur, the Research and Policy Committee has started the groundwork for the establishment of a core list of books for African American Studies. This is a long-term, ongoing project that benefits the profession and the field of African American Studies. Once the list has been generated, it will be published on the AFAS

web site. Thanks to all those who have volunteered their time and expertise to this project.

Vice Chair/ Chair Elect Myrtis Cochran, Past Chair Raquel Cogell and I have been working on a Leadership Manual to ensure smooth transitions for new officers and committee chairs. The manual will include important checklists and timelines for both elected and appointed offices, as well as references to pertinent ACRL tip sheets and guidelines.

Over the years, AFAS has provided timely and exciting programming for ALA Annual. This year, the AFAS Conference Program Committee has partnered with the Anthropology and Social Sciences (ANSS) section of ACRL to present a unique program in Orlando this summer. The program titled "*Her Eyes Were Watching Humanity: Zora Neale Hurston as Ethnographer, Novelist, and Feminist*" features a panel of distinguished authors who will discuss Hurston's contributions and legacy. The panel includes: Pamela Bordelon, independent scholar and author of *Go Gator and Muddy the Water: Writings by Zora Neale Hurston from the Federal Writers Project*; Valerie Boyd, journalist and award winning author of *Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston*; and Deborah G. Plant, professor and author of *Every Tub Must Sit on Its Own Bottom: The Philosophy and Politics of Zora Neale Hurston*. I hope you will all find time during your busy ALA schedules to join us. The ANSS and AFAS Programming Committees have done a fine job in putting

this collaborative program together. I would like to extend a special thank you to AFAS member Sybil E. Moses for her ex officio role as advisor in the early stages of planning and for suggesting Valerie Boyd as a possible speaker.

At the end of the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, Chair Elect Myrtis Cochran will assume the position of Chair of AFAS. With the support of the AFAS membership and leadership, I am confident that Myrtis will continue to advance the themes and hard work of our section. It has been fulfilling for me personally and professionally to serve on AFAS committees and I encourage all of you who are interested in helping AFAS to progress by serving on committees to contact Myrtis for details:

[mcochran@library.berkeley.edu](mailto:mcochran@library.berkeley.edu)

It has been my privilege to serve as your Chair this past year, and I look forward to seeing you in Orlando.

Lisa Pillow

Chair, AFAS 2003-2004

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## LOOKING AHEAD: AFAS 2004-2005

After ALA in Orlando this summer, I will begin my year as chair of AFAS. I am looking forward to a successful year, one that can only be achieved with your help, the members of AFAS. A top priority is to continue the work of current chair Lisa Pillow and build on the work of past chairs. In addition, I will follow up on ideas and thoughts regarding issues of concern for AFAS that were generated at ALA Midwinter in San Diego. Several questions were raised regarding what we as a section can do to raise the awareness of African American Studies librarianship. One idea, and one I think worth pursuing, is to sponsor a program at the Ethnic Causes' Conference in 2006. Other questions that may or may not be within our purview centered on the role of AFAS librarians and services to the African American poor and prison communities.

I would like to explore these suggestions and, in addition, focus on monitoring the ACRL Strategic Plan as it relates to sections, increasing committee participation, and providing support to ongoing activities such as the Research & Policy Committee's Core List Project of African American books and journals. The success of AFAS starts with you. As members of AFAS, we all need to participate in Section business and projects to foster positive contributions to African American Studies scholarship and librarianship. If you have suggestions that will help AFAS to achieve its goals and meet your needs, please send comments to AFAS-L or directly to me.

We can make the organization work for us if we commit ourselves to the work.

If you're interested in committee

participation or any of the issues mentioned here, please e-mail me. My thanks to all the new committee volunteers and to those who accepted my invitation to continue their participation on an AFAS committee.

Myrtis Cochran

Vice Chair/Chair Elect

[mcochran@library.berkeley.edu](mailto:mcochran@library.berkeley.edu)

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## MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

In August 2003, **Kathleen Bethel** of Northwestern University received the **Irma Kingsley Johnson Distinguished Service Award** from the Chicago Friends of the Amistad Research Center (Tulane University). Established to pay tribute to the memory of the chapter's founder, the award is presented annually, "For outstanding dedication to education, to humanity and to community service with special interest in preserving African American history." The award was presented in the Grand Ballroom at Chicago's Navy Pier; the event coincided with the Freedom Schooner Amistad's visit during the Tall Ships Chicago 2003.

Kathleen Bethel published conference paper: "Afrocentricity and the Arrangement of Knowledge," in *Afrocentricity and the Academy: Essays on Theory and Practice*, edited by James L. Conyers (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003): 50-65.

## CORE LIST PROJECT: POLICY AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE

In the summer of 2003 the AFAS Policy and Research Committee was charged with developing a core book list of African American studies research material that would assist librarians responsible for developing collections in this area. In recent years there has been a growing interest in the development of Core lists from a variety of different disciplines. Beyond the more obvious value for library collection building, a list of core materials may also aid instructors and scholars in identifying important resources for research and teaching.

In the months following the ALA Annual Conference in Toronto, Canada, a call for volunteers was made and a project team was assembled from those who responded. As a first order of business the group undertook a survey of methods for generating lists of core materials as well as a literature review to identify key areas of study within the multidisciplinary field of African American studies. As part of this process, the group shared a number of readings, and consulted with African American Studies faculty and librarians, including members of the ACRL Women's Studies Section who currently maintain a core list for their field.

The results of our research indicated that there were a variety of possible approaches and criteria for establishing such lists as well as a number of different viewpoints to be considered. Some of the ideas that emerged from discussions among team members considered the utility of bibliometric measures for generating a list of core materials and the need to highlight some of the more esoteric and difficult to find areas of research within the discipline. Ultimately, our goal has been to incorporate a variety of these elements in creating a valuable resource for the Section and for African American studies research as a whole.

During the first phase of our research, it had been brought to the team's attention that AFAS Member-at-Large and Atlanta University Center librarian, Akilah Nosakhere, along with other area librarians, had been working on a survey project for African American Studies resources. This group's project, which collected and analyzed syllabi and reading lists from African American Studies faculty around the country, seemed to have some things in common with our own effort. This past January at ALA Midwinter in San Diego, members of the AFAS Core List Project Team met with Nosakhere to discuss the AFAS Core List project and ways in which the two efforts to develop a list of research materials for African American studies could be paired. At that meeting Nosakhere shared with the group her idea of creating a searchable web database to house and showcase the titles collected from her study. After some discussion of this idea, members present at the meeting agreed that the Project Team should work alongside Nosakhere's group to develop and manage this resource. In the coming months the Core List Project team will contribute to the work in progress by updating the existing list with newer titles and annotations, and by continuing our work to develop subject related lists of materials for African American Studies.

LeRoy LaFleur, Social Sciences Bibliographer, Albert R. Mann Library, Cornell University

## ARL COLLABORATES TO CELEBRATE BROWN ANNIVERSARY

In celebration of the May 17<sup>th</sup> 2004 marking of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Supreme Court decision in the *Oliver L. Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas et al.*, the Association of Research Libraries' Diversity Program Officer, Jerome Offord Jr., has spearheaded a project for librarians to contribute literature and resources to commemorate this event. This bibliography will appear as a collaborative effort along with the support and participation of the NAACP and Amnesty International in a national toolkit. The participants who compiled the anniversary bibliography are:

Maricia Battle, Associate Curator  
Architecture, Design, and Engineering  
Collections  
Prints and Photographs Division  
The Library of Congress

Irene Owens, Ph.D.  
Cultural Resources Consultant  
J. C. Melanin Associates

Delinda Stephens Buie, Curator  
Rare Books- Ekstrom Library  
University of Louisville

Deborah L. Dandridge, Archivist  
African American Collections  
Kansas Collection  
Spencer Research Library  
University of Kansas

Tiffeni J. Fontno, Business Librarian  
Kelvin Smith Library  
Case Western Reserve University

Carlette Washington-Hoagland  
Coordinator of Assessment and Staff  
Development  
University of Iowa Libraries

Danna C. Bell-Russel  
Digital Reference Specialist  
The Library of Congress

Roland Barksdale-Hall, Co-chairperson,  
ARL/NAACP Brown v. Board of  
Education  
50th Anniversary Bibliography  
Committee  
Managing Editor  
Newsletter of the Black Caucus of the  
American Library Association, Inc.

Carroll L. Johnson, Exhibit Director  
Interpretive Programs Office  
The Library of Congress

Sibyl E. Moses, Ph.D.  
Reference Specialist, African American  
History and Culture  
Humanities and Social Sciences Division  
The Library of Congress

Jerome Offord, Jr., MS  
Program Officer for Training and  
Diversity  
Association of Research Libraries

Dorothy Persson, Head Librarian  
Psychology Department  
University of Iowa Libraries

Sherrill Redmon  
Director of the Sophia Smith Collection  
Smith College

Dorothy Ann Washington, Librarian  
Black Cultural Center  
Purdue University

Janet Sims-Wood, Ph.D.  
Co-chairperson,  
ARL/NAACP Brown v. Board of  
Education  
50th Anniversary Bibliography  
Committee  
Assistant Chief Librarian  
Moorland-Spangarn Research Center  
Howard University

The finished product will be made available on the anniversary date and a link will be made available on the ARL Diversity Program's website: <http://www.arl.org/diversity/index.html>.

## **PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **HER EYES WERE WATCHING HUMANITY: ZORA NEALE HURSTON AS ETHNOGRAPHER, NOVELIST, AND FEMINIST**

[HTTP://WWW.LIBRARY.UIUC.EDU/EDX/ZORA/](http://www.library.uiuc.edu/edx/zora/)

**(JOINT PROGRAM WITH ANSS)**

SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 2004, 8:30AM-12:00PM

**SPEAKERS:** VALERIE BOYD, ARTS EDITOR, ATLANTA JOURNAL AND CONSTITUTION; PAMELA BORDELON, PH.D., PENSACOLA, FLA.; DEBORAH G. PLANT, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPT. OF AFRICANA STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA, TAMPA

### **EDUCATING THE EDUCATORS: CREATION OF AN INFORMATION LITERACY COURSE FOR BLACK STUDIES FACULTY**

[HTTP://WWW.CSULB.EDU/~TTRAVIS/IC/CSULB/LINKS.HTM](http://www.csulb.edu/~ttravis/ic/csulb/links.htm)

**(CO-SPONSOR WITH BLACK CAUCUS OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARIAN ASSOCIATION)**

SATURDAY, JUNE 26, 2004, 10:30A.M. - 12:00 P.M

**SPEAKERS:** SUSAN LUÉVANO, ETHNIC, WOMEN'S, & MULTICULTURAL STUDIES LIBRARIAN;  
TIFFINI TRAVIS, PSYCHOLOGY & COMMUNICATION STUDIES LIBRARIAN

### **IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON ASIAN, AFRICAN, AND THE MIDDLE EASTERN COLLECTIONS (CO-SPONSOR WITH ACRL'S ASIAN, AFRICAN, AND MIDDLE EASTERN SECTION-AAMES)**

SATURDAY, JUNE 26, 2004, 2:00 - 4:00 P.M.

**SPEAKERS:** KAY RASEROKA, DIRECTOR OF THE LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA,  
AFRICA/CURRENT PRESIDENT OF IFLA  
DR. C.C. CHEN, PROFESSOR, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE,  
SIMMONS COLLEGE BOSTON  
DR. MOHAMMED AMAN, PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE,  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MILWAUKEE

### **DOCUMENTING CULTURAL COMMUNITIES IN FLORIDA (CO-SPONSOR WITH ACRL'S RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS SECTIONS-RBMS)**

SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 1:30PM-3:30 P.M.

**SPEAKERS:** JOEL BUCHANAN, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, GAINESVILLE; STEVEN KERR, STONEWALL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE, FORT LAUDERDALE

AFAS Newsletter  
c/o ACRL  
50 East Huron Street  
Chicago, IL 60611

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
American Library  
Association

**AFAS Newsletter** (ISSN 1076-8955) is published by the African American Librarian's Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611.

1-800-545-2433, ext. 2523

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The **AFAS Newsletter** is sent to all AFAS members at no additional cost. Claims and address changes should be sent to the above address, Attention: Membership.

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The **AFAS Newsletter** welcomes contributions from readers. Send articles, items of interest, and news to the editor, preferably in electronic format.

### AFAS OFFICERS 2002 / 2003

Lisa Pillow, Chair

Myrtis Cochran, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect

Raquel Cogell, Past Chair

Angela J. Wright, Secretary

Grace Jackson-Brown, Member-at-Large

Bennie Robinson, Member-at-Large

### Committee Chairs

#### Membership

Akilah Nosakhare

#### Programming

Angela M. Gooden

#### Cataloging Issues

Dorothy A. Washington

#### Nominating

Raquel Cogell

#### Policy and Research

Lee LaFleur

#### Publications

Tiffeni Fontno