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Virginia Libraries

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OPENERS

Welcoming Everyone

by C. A. Gardner and Cy Dillon

This issue arose from a set of fortuitous circumstances. Last year, I attended several of the multicultural programs at the Newport News Public Library System (p. 7). There I had the good luck to connect with poet Luisa A. Igloria, who not only agreed to an interview (p. 10), but provided helpful resources for exploring Filipino-American literature (p. 21). When Caroline Fitzpierce and Denise Morgan sent us an article about conversation groups for immigrants (p. 23), I realized that all three items might fit together in an issue that would examine the many ways in which libraries can support the needs of a wide variety of groups, providing solutions for patrons whose experiences are not covered by standard offerings for white, mainstream America—those who might otherwise feel marginalized or excluded for reasons of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, socioeconomic status, or other factors.

We hoped that the subject would spark much interest, and we were not disappointed. Soon the articles began pouring in, covering everything from collection development to new training programs for patrons (p. 34) and staff (p. 36), community involvement and collaboration (p. 4), needs assessments, special events and staff diversification (p. 41), and more. Some articles celebrate successful achievements, providing details for duplication; others serve as a call to arms, documenting where our service has failed. In these pages, often-invisible patron groups such as the undocumented (p. 26) and

the GLBT community (p. 45) find a voice. Through all their variety, these articles provide strong examples of how to take a more active role in service to our communities.

The news of late has proven just how apropos these subjects are. Witness the recent Day without Immigrants boycott on May 1, the current debate over immigration in the U.S. Congress, or the ongoing conflict over gay marriage, with the concomitant questions it raises about gay rights. With these and many similar events, it's no surprise that the subject of multiculturalism in libraries strikes a chord. And seeking to serve our diverse patrons better is also to our own advantage. As Ann Friedman points out (p. 31), this new paradigm of service can help libraries succeed both in the quest for continued funding and in the effort to become more relevant to our changing communities in the twenty-first century.

VLA's Multicultural Forum is currently working on an initiative that dovetails perfectly with this issue. Beverly Abdus-Sabur (babdussa@richmond.k12.va.us) and Lena Gonzalez Berrios (lberrios@crrl.org) are organizing a resource toolkit that will be available in print and on VLA's website in January 2007. They're looking for submissions that document solutions, strategies, programming ideas, and resources for serving diverse populations. The deadline for contributions to the toolkit is September 30, 2006.

We'd like to take a moment to thank to Gloria C. Harvell of the Virginia State University Library for detecting errors in the list of

VLA life members from our centennial keepsake edition (vol. 51, no. 3)—and apologize to Sarah Wallace, Florence Chandler, and Catherine Vaughn Bland for failing to list their library affiliations. Jon Marken, our remarkable graphic designer, has been able to produce a corrected insert that will be mailed with this issue. This four-page section can replace the complete original gathering.

Speaking of updates for a new era, according to the staff of Virginia Tech's Digital Library and Archive, the online version of *Virginia Libraries* was accessed 254,060 times in 2003, the last year for which statistics are currently available. Since that time, acceptance into the Directory of Open Access Journals has given *Virginia Libraries* an international presence that is sure to result in even more use in the future.

In keeping with our increased visibility as well as changes in technology, we've updated our contributor's guidelines (p. 20) and "About *Virginia Libraries*" (inside back cover). We hope you will review them and consider contributing to your association's journal. As always, we welcome your insights into current issues that face libraries in Virginia. Show us how your library is expanding services, increasing access to collections, or coping with new challenges! Photographs and illustrations are especially welcome.

To encourage more contributions to the summer issue, we've extended the deadline to June 30. The deadline for the fall issue remains September 15. We'd love to hear from you. ■

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

It's All About Access

by Ruth Arnold

Advocacy. That's been the theme this spring. Every meeting I go to and every library periodical I read exhorts me to advocacy. To advocate, according to the dictionary, is to support something, to defend a proposal or even to plead the cause of another. In this case, I am being asked to plead the cause of libraries. It's a worthy cause. Naturally, I believe in libraries. After all, I have been a library user all my life and a librarian for half of it. But something about that call to advocacy makes me uncomfortable. It smacks of zealotry. Surely it should be enough that I work in a library. I'm already a public servant; I shouldn't have to be an advocate, too!

But after attending the American Library Association Legislative Day in May, I'm beginning to come around to another point of view. Although I have participated in the VLA Legislative Day for many years, this was the first time I had gone to the ALA version. It was exciting to walk around the Capitol district of Washington, D.C., and in the marble halls of government. It was also a little scary. Even after a full day of briefing from ALA Washington office staff, I still felt confused on some of the issues when confronted by my congressman. Nevertheless, I began to feel that it was important that we were there. It is our right as citizens, and furthermore, our message needs to be heard by those aides and legislators. We are not only representing ourselves and our profession, but we are also speaking on behalf of all of our patrons who may never have that opportunity.

The services that we provide—the books, the story hours, the online databases, the extensive reference and research assistance, the community meeting rooms, the back issues of newspapers, the family history materials, not to mention the Internet computers—are often not available to our patrons

... if we don't let our government leaders know this, who will?

from any other source, and certainly not at such low cost. Federal funding, in the form of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), the Improving Literacy through School Libraries (LSL) program, and government documents from the GPO, to name just a few, is crucial to our operations. And if we don't let our government leaders know this, who will? The publishers and the Internet providers are not pleading our cause. It really is up to us to "make the ask," as they say in the trade. Write the letter, make the call, go to a town meeting, schedule a visit. A few well-written letters can make all the difference. If we never tell our legislators what we want them to know, how will they ever find out?

When I was organizing my notes after the ALA briefing in preparation for the Capitol Hill office visits the next day, I realized that every issue related to access. Whether it was LSTA funding, preserving the

e-rate, copyright concerns, open government information, or net-neutrality, it was all about access. Not for the librarians, but for the public, the voters, the taxpayers. That was the main message we took to congress.

So I guess I am an advocate, after all. We all are, if you get us going. We are always urging our patrons to read this book, come to this program, use this online database. Now we need to widen the circle and ask our patrons to let their government officials—local, state, and national—know the importance of libraries in their lives, for their work, for school, or just for fun. **VI**



The Virginia Coalition for Open Government

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visit our newly redesigned Web site: <http://www.opengovva.org>

Public Libraries and Immigrants— Tradition!

by Nancy Buck

Since its beginnings circa 1901, the New York Public Library has felt that immigrants need to have access to learning materials and examples of literature in English in order to become American. As described in the library's history (<http://www.nypl.org/pr/history.cfm>), "Among its earliest beneficiaries were recently arrived immigrants, for whom the Library provided contact with the literature and history of their new country as well as the heritage that these people brought with them." Libraries all over the United States continue in this very traditional library role by helping all citizens, including immigrants, to locate classes and tutors to study for the GED or learn English; find INS offices; register for the selective service online; use public-access computers to remain in contact with family; study for citizenship exams; register for a library card; share stories with their children; find jobs and community services; and participate in town meetings, among other civic duties and privileges.

The Central Rappahannock Regional Library is pleased to be a participant in this traditional library role. Our Alliance for Literacy volunteer tutoring program provides one-to-one tutoring and drop-in tutoring sessions. We coordinate our efforts with those of the



**We embrace our
community, and it has
embraced us.**

regional adult education program. Like your libraries, we have public-access computers at each of our branches, including several workstations that have a Spanish keyboard. We encourage everyone to use our reference services, whether they are card-holders or not. Here are just a few examples of assistance we've provided or located for our patrons.

Avni (Serbian) had a visa, but his employer required him to at-

tain U.S. citizenship in order to keep his job. When he contacted the library to find out where to begin, he discovered that we could pair him with a volunteer tutor who would help him study for the citizenship exam. We learned that young men who seek citizenship are required to register for the selective service, so our literacy manager helped Avni register online and print out a confirmation notice. Avni then took these papers to INS so

that he could complete his citizenship application. He is now a tax-paying American citizen. He is also continuing his education, working with a tutor to further improve his English.

This spring, Roger (Bolivian) and his daughter Mariel were told that classes for English wouldn't start until September. Roger called the library and discovered that volunteer tutors at our semi-weekly drop-in tutoring sessions could be a starting point. Roger has a bachelor's degree from a university in Bolivia and is working as an electrician. He is lucky; this is actually his trade. (We've worked with doc-

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Left, voter registration at Central Rappahannock Regional Library.

Right, no empty tables in the study area.

Below, the library table at the Hispanic Month festival.



tors who can't yet practice and are flipping pizzas instead.) However, Roger can't be a master electrician until he improves his English so that he can pass the electrician's licensing exam. His daughter graduated from high school in Bolivia and wants to go to college and major in journalism.

In a small group class, we are practicing conversational English and writing and reading in English, using electrician's manuals

and the newspaper. As luck would have it, one of the tutors works for the local newspaper and offered to answer questions about articles as well as construct writing exercises.

We encourage everyone, including ourselves, to participate more fully in the community. In 2005, we were invited to work with Spotsylvania County to prepare factual materials for county bond referenda. Working within strict legal constraints, library staff used freeware

to develop a twenty-three-minute DVD to provide educational background material for each of the four referenda on transportation, libraries and parks, schools, and public safety. We also prepared print materials, which had to be vetted by the county attorney, and assisted the county in distributing these in the month before the November elections. Citizens stopped in the libraries and other county buildings to view the DVD and make notes on the print brochure. All four referenda passed.

Recently, we were awarded two *We the People* "Becoming American" Bookshelf grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities in its partnership with ALA. Youth services staff will use the materials in book discussion groups at the Rappahannock Juvenile Detention Center, the Boys and Girls Club, and other youth groups meeting at the libraries. Themes of citizenship, civic involvement, and participation in the democratic process will be explored with adolescents from different ethnic, economic, and racial backgrounds.



A tutoring session conducted by volunteers.

We embrace our community, and it has embraced us. We find more Spanish-speaking people at our neighborhood bookmobile stops, so our bookmobile schedule is bilingual. The bookmobile carries mostly English-language materials, but there are a couple of shelves of materials for all ages in Spanish. We also give away free English-Spanish dictionaries. At several branches, we have one Spanish-language public-access computer; they are quite popular for sending messages back home and keeping up with Spanish-language news online.

This makes it sound as though there are only Spanish-speaking immigrants in our area. We also have communities of people who speak Serbian, Croatian, Greek, Russian, French, Japanese, Thai, and Korean, and I'm certain I'm still leaving someone out. And like Avni, Roger, and Mariel, many of

them are looking for citizenship information, job skills training, and English classes or tutors.

The public library is uniquely positioned to help people in the community access information. We have few eligibility requirements—if a patron wants a library card to check out materials, he or she needs to disclose a local address. But even without a card, our resources are available for unlimited in-house use. Based on the fact that we are helping people access information that can help them become taxpayers and, ideally, library supporters, this seems like a good investment for everyone.

A few resources to have at your fingertips:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm>

New to the immigration pro-

cess? Among many other resources, USCIS.gov offers a free booklet, "Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants," which includes tips on accessing community information and resources as well as how to become a citizen. The guide is available in PDF or HTML (print copies can be purchased). Some of the languages included are English, Korean, Chinese, Arabic, French, Russian, Haitian, and Creole.

The Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center: <http://www.valrc.org/>

Find the local adult education program in your area for classes about the GED, adult basic education, and English as a second language. Look on the right side of the home page for a link to Local Programs.

Virginia I and R System and 2-1-1 Virginia: <http://www.211virginia.org/> or <http://www.vaiandr.com>

Don't know where to find help with health care costs, utility cut-offs, drug or alcohol abuse, safe drinking water, prenatal care, services for the disabled, or other human problems? Use the searchable database (search by zip code, keyword, and more) or call a local I&R center at (800) 230-6977.

Virginia Employment Commission: <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/vecportal/>

The VEC provides links to jobs in the commonwealth to use along with your local newspaper or other classifieds. Includes information in Spanish. **VI**

Cultures Come Together at the Newport News Public Libraries

by Sacil Armstrong

The Newport News Public Library System (NNPLS) in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia serves about 180,000 residents as well as visitors from outside the city. Last year, more than 800,000 customers came through our doors and more than 14,000 people applied for new library cards. In recent years, the city has seen an increase in ethnic diversity, and the library system has recognized that many of these cultural populations have needs that require special assistance and services.

The Hispanic population is the fastest growing ethnic group in the City of Newport News. The Virgil I. Grissom Library, which serves sixty percent of the city's residents, has more Spanish-speaking customers than the other three branches in the system. To welcome and encourage this cultural group to use library services, Grissom expanded its Spanish and dual language collection in 2004, adding more than 350 Spanish language books for children from birth to age five, as well as materials for parents and childcare givers. Spanish language adult fiction was already available in the collection. Additionally, the library system had its general brochure and application translated into Spanish. The Newport News Healthy Families Initiative provided funding for the materials through a grant from the Community-Based Family Resource and Support Hispanic Outreach Program of the Virginia Department of Social Ser-



A young dancer shares her cultural heritage.

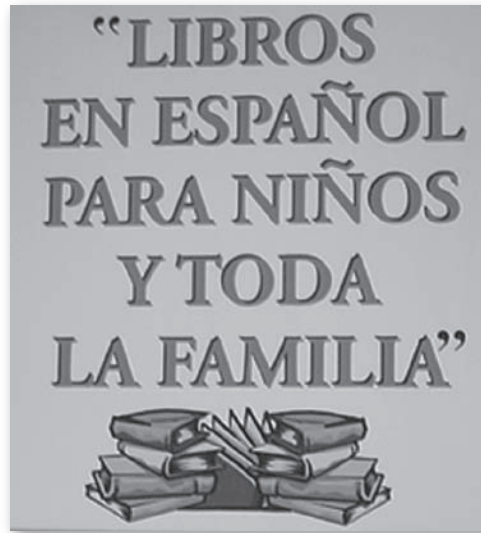
vices. Author Samuel Caraballo of Virginia Beach helped to celebrate the unveiling of the new collection by reading his latest work, *Estrellita*

"The VFH gave us \$5 more than we asked for, just to show how much they supported what we were doing!"

Says Goodbye to Her Island/Estrellita se despide de su isla.

In an effort to recognize other cultures within the city, the library system planned a series of programs for 2005, *Explore Your Community Roots @ Your Library®*. By August 2004, twelve community groups had agreed to participate by sharing their cultures, immigration stories, and recommendations

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Far left, filling out Spanish library card applications.

Left, a sign advertising Spanish services.

Below, teaching ikebana.

for book discussions. The featured cultures included Mennonite, Irish, Italian, Greek, Hispanic, Japanese, African-American, Korean, African, German, American Indian, and Jewish.

Grant writer Judy Condra worked closely with this author to create a detailed write-up of the program and a proposal for funding. The Virginia Foundation for the Humanities awarded more than \$10,000 to support the program series. As Condra pointed out, "The VFH gave us \$5 more than we asked for, just to show how much they supported what we were doing!"

Programs highlighting each culture brought in diverse audiences. People were inquisitive about their neighbors and other ways of life. The series provided a safe environment where it wasn't rude to ask about a custom or tradition, and questions were encouraged. And since the people leading the cultural programs came from those respective backgrounds, the programs weren't just history lessons,



but a community coming together at the library to learn from each other.

For each culture, NNPLS presented a discussion of a book by an author from that culture and a program that focused on the traditions, customs, food, language, and music of the culture. Area university scholars who specialize in foreign literature led the book discussions. The professors themselves came from a wide range of backgrounds, including Filipino, German, African-American, and

others. Input from the cultural groups, recommendations from the scholars, and research by library staff all played key roles in which titles were ultimately selected. The list included new and established authors, Oprah's book club picks, the currently popular "chick lit," classics, and many genres in between. In addition to the featured titles, the library also assessed and updated the materials by and about the chosen cultures. This included fiction, nonfiction, poetry, movies, and music.



Displays help share cultures from the community.

Featured titles included *Copper Moons* by local Mennonite author Susan Yoder Ackerman; *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt; *In Revere, In Those Days* by Roland Merullo; *Zorba the Greek* by Nick Kazantzakis; *Caramelo* by Sandra Cisneros; *Snow Country* by Yasunari Kawabata; *The Known World* by Edward P. Jones; *In Full Bloom* by new author Caroline Hwang; *No Longer at Ease* by Chinua Achebe; *Stones from the River* by Ursula Hegi; *Dancing the Dream* by Jamie Sams; and *Seven Blessings* by Ruchama King. In addition to the grant-sponsored programs, NNPLS also featured local poet and scholar Luisa Igloria. Her presentation on Filipino literature was based on a collection that she edited, *Not Home but Here: Writing from the Filipino Diaspora*.

"The turnout has been amazing," said Library Director Izabela Cieszynski. "More than seventy people attended the event presented by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Several audience mem-

bers joined in an impromptu salsa lesson!" Even the programs that drew smaller audiences showed strong diversity. For example, thirteen people participated in the


**"Reading about a
community is one thing,
but interacting with it
is far better."**

discussion of the Japanese novel *Snow Country* by Yasunari Kawabata. Those thirteen represented East Indian, Italian, Irish, African-American, and Japanese cultures. An anonymous patron wrote on a program evaluation, "Reading about a community is one thing, but interacting with it is far better. Culture is important, but bringing culture and history together is very important. This is the his-

tory of my neighborhood. I want to know it."

The program ended in December 2005, but the partnerships that were formed will last much longer. Cultural groups are looking forward to more presentations; the professors have all expressed interest in working on other programs; and the community is already asking, "What's next?"

Because of this intense program series and the publicity it generated, the library's message reached new audiences. According to program surveys, thirty-one percent of our participants had never attended a library program before. Participants also reported that their experiences were overwhelmingly positive, and that this made them feel more comfortable in the library setting.

For more information on NNPLS and its programs, call (757) 247-8875 or visit us on the web at www.nngov.com/library. 

History and the Work of Memory: An Interview with Luisa A. Igloria

by C. A. Gardner

Published widely in the Philippines and the United States, Luisa A. Igloria has won more than fifty literary awards, honors, grants, fellowships, and prizes, among them the Manila Critics Circle National Book Award (the National Book Award of the Philippines), the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Award for Literature (the Pulitzer Prize of the Philippines), the Stephen Dunn Award in Poetry, the George Kent Prize for Poetry, an Illinois Arts Council Award, a Fulbright Fellowship, and the Charles Goodnow Endowed Award for Poetry. Her book-length publications (some appear under variations of the name Maria Luisa Aguilar-Cariño) include: *Cordillera Tales* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1990, ISBN 971-10-0379-1); *Cartography: A Collection of Poetry on Baguio* (Metro Manila, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 1992, ISBN 971-27-0211-1); *Encanto: New Poems* (Metro Manila, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 1994, ISBN: 971-27-0388-6); *In the Garden of the Three Islands* (Wakefield, R.I.: Asphodel Press, 1995, ISBN 0-55921-117-2); *Blood Sacrifice* (University of the Philippines Press, 1997, ISBN 971-542-157-1); *Songs for the Beginning of the Millennium* (De La Salle University Press, 1997); and, her most recent work, *Trill & Mordent* (Cincinnati, Ohio: WordTech Editions, 2005, ISBN: 1-932339-94-9). (For any that are hard to locate, email Linda Maria Nietes of Philippine Expressions Mail-Order Books



PHOTO BY INA CARIÑO

at linda_nietes@sbcglobal.net.) In addition, Igloria has edited *Turnings: Writing on Women's Transformations* (with Renée Olander; Norfolk, Va.: Old Dominion University, Friends of Women's Studies, 2000) and *Not Home, But Here: Writing from the Filipino Diaspora* (Metro Manila, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 2003). She holds a Ph.D. in English/Creative Writing from the University of Illinois at Chicago, an M.A. in Literature from Ateneo de Manila University, and a B.A. in Humanities from the University of the Philippines. She currently serves as associate professor in the M.F.A. creative writing program at Old Dominion University.

VL How did you begin writing poetry? What were some of your biggest influences? Who encouraged you the most?

LAI I have an early memory of coming both to writing and to reading. I learned to read at the age of three, which

might have been the result of being raised as an only child. I didn't learn until I was twenty-eight that I have a half-sister and two half-brothers. My parents—the ones who raised me—were twenty years apart in age, so I felt there was a bit of formality in the way they brought me up. My father was a lawyer who went on to become a judge; my mother went back to school when I was nearly done with college and got her Ph.D. ahead of me. Their value system very much involved paying attention to the written word, to reading, to books, to the humanities in general. In my father's career as a public servant, there were times when he could score free tickets to cultural events—so we'd get to see a concert by Van Cliburn or the stars of the Russian ballet. I remember my mother taking me to music halls and my father taking me to spaghetti westerns—they loved the whole arena of cultural offerings, even in a small place like Baguio, and felt I should be exposed to

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these things. My father would always bring home books and ask me whether there was anything new I wanted to read; I remember asking him to bring home books rather than toys. I don't mean to portray myself as a complete square, but I really, really liked reading, and I think this too is because of their influence on me.

My love of writing, my love of poetry, began in those kinds of activities. I wrote my first story in first grade. My parents signed me up for piano lessons at the age of three, hoping I might pursue a career in music (I am told I was named after a Filipina concert pianist, Maria Luisa Lopez Vito). I took enough years of piano lessons that I could have gone on to the conservatory. Their other hope was that I'd be a lawyer, like my father. But when I was a college freshman, I got hijacked by my English teachers. They saw my potential and convinced me that I might really grow in a career in literature. They dragged me up to the faculty rooms, sat me down, and said, "Look, we really like your writing. We think that you have a gift as far as literature is concerned."

When I was six or seven, my mother gave me a book called *Magnificence and Other Stories* by one of the early Filipina fiction writers in English, Estrella Alfon. My mother inscribed the book with her wish that I would be a writer someday. Now that I think back on that story, I'm kind of stunned—what was my mother thinking, giving me a book like that at this age? It's something of an epiphany for me, because it was a very grown-up book—not a picture book at all, a very mature choice of reading matter. It's very deftly handled fiction. Estrella Alfon writes about everyday life, but she captures the details in this dazzling, intense light. She could write about the ordinary and make it extraordinary. She could write about a day on the farm or a pic-

nic with friends or a poor laundry woman wishing that her life were different because she was being abused by her mistress. They were very simple stories about ordinary people, whose lives we don't know until she uncovers them in the stories. I was just hooked. Whatever designs my mother may have had, they worked. I feel so much more fulfilled because I had that early gift.

VL I know you've written under different versions of your name mostly due to changes in

**Now that I think back
on that story, I'm kind
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that at this age?**

your marital status, but there have also been changes in your first name and initials (Maria Luisa B. Aguilar-Cariño, Ma. Luisa B. Aguilar-Cariño, Maria Luisa A. Cariño, Luisa Igloria, Luisa A. Igloria). Is this a reflection of the poet's journey and changing identity? Did your family call you Luisa, or did that come about later? Have you had difficulty with audience recognition?

LA I My name changes have certainly been because of marriage. I was married for about fifteen years, and then that fell apart. When I got out of that relationship, I was playing with the idea of reclaiming my maiden name, but the journey didn't end there. When I remarried in 1999, I decided to change my name to Luisa Igloria and drop the Maria, partly from some annoyance or frustra-

tion. Here in Northern America, most people don't seem to know what to do with names like Maria Luisa—Hispanic-sounding names. I didn't like to be called just Maria, leaving out the Luisa. It was either both together, or don't say it at all. It's a much more common thing in the Philippines for little girls to be given two names. Maria seems to be an honorific; perhaps at one point it was a religious thing—the Philippines has the largest Roman Catholic population in Southeast Asia. People understand that when a girl is Maria Theresa or Maria Carmencita, it's the whole package—she's not just Maria. But at the same time, if her name is Maria Christina, it's perfectly okay just to call her Christina. You also have shortened versions, Filipino nicknames like Maricris. For a while when I was growing up they would call me Marilu or Malu. I didn't really like it; it just didn't feel like it was me. But Luisa was okay.

So now it's Luisa Igloria. I have enough confidence in who I am to know that the name I was given at birth is still going to be my name, no matter what appears on paper. And I find that people remember it better; there might be some advantage to having a compact name.

VL Did you have any trouble with people recognizing that you were the same person despite the different forms of your name?

LA I I don't really stress out about that much because I feel there are enough other cross-references that will lead them to that information. People have written to me, saying, "I didn't know you were Luisa Cariño. I used to read her." I don't think it's my job to explain all the time.

VL What differences are there between the literary scene in the Philippines and the one here?

LA I Before I came to the U.S., I already had a significant

publishing history. But that background wasn't something I could rest on. I felt I had to reestablish myself and build up credentials here. I guess every community, every culture has its own form of ethnocentrism. And it's a bigger pond here, with more fish swimming in it. There are many more writers here, and it didn't necessarily mean anything that I had this background.

VL It should have.

LAI Yes, but I felt I had to prune myself away from that. My credentials—for instance, my National Book Awards in the Philippines—have been both a buoy and a bane sometimes. It can be a really positive thing when people recognize what it means to have been given such an accolade; but at other times, people find a need to query it more closely: “Is it the same as the American National Book Award? Would you please explain further?” Sometimes I wish that people would make the effort to look beyond their own customary perceptions and admit the existence of other things in the world. It often feels that there is an additional burden on me to keep explaining where I come from. There is this perhaps idealistic wish among writers of color or people who might be coming out of a third-world context, people who are labeled “ethnic” or “minority” writers, that they didn't have to be the medium of translation for who or what they are perceived to represent. Not that I see myself necessarily as a representative of a people or a collective experience, because first and foremost I write from a very personal standpoint. I do like to write about subjects that might have an interest for other people with the same background, but I can't claim to speak for them or their experiences of the world. In a more general sense, I think it's

an issue that all writers face. Everybody wants to be understood, to reach an audience. But writers who are coming out of this set of circumstances and cultural backgrounds have additional burdens.

Going back to the original question, I think both the Philippine and U.S. literary scenes are lively, but lively in different ways. I still get a sense of what people are doing back home in the Philippines. I have friends who are active in writers' circles there. With the

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help of the Internet, writers have really been able to close distances and collaborate despite geography. For instance, when I edited *Not Home But Here: Writing from the Filipino Diaspora*, I'd say eighty-five percent of it was pulled together through electronic means. Only after the book came together did I meet some of the writers at literary events. And it's great—there are ties that I keep and maintain with writers through the Internet. I collaborate with a few writers in the Philippines, and we do translations of each other's work. I still maintain ties with the Philippine Literary Arts Council, and I'm hoping to take part in an exhibit that they're planning for January 2007 called Chromatext, combining visual art with text (installation art). There are all kinds of things going on.

Here, there's a similar sense of activity, of programs always going on, lots of readings, conferences—the U.S. literary scene is very alive

in this sense. I try to go every year to the conferences of the Modern Language Association and Associated Writing Programs. You can see how huge the field is when you go to these things—it's like a five-ring circus, so many activities. But as I've gone back year after year, even if the numbers are swelling, it seems as if it's also a very small group of people—certain groups keep coming back, and you see the same writers over and over again. I wouldn't say it's completely incestuous, but it can also seem like a closed culture.

VL Was it like that in the Philippines?

LAI Maybe because the community is smaller, it feels like there can be closer links over there. There are mentorship opportunities, for instance, with younger writers or people who are trying to discover whether the writing path is for them. Maybe they decide to commit themselves to attending a workshop or seeking the tutelage of older or more experienced writers. In a way, I feel that it can be a more generous community of writers. I don't know why that's so.

VL It seems to me, since the United States is so big, that a lot of organizations are somewhat faceless. There are so many of them, so many people involved.

LAI Right—and that facelessness, I suppose, speaks to a lot of the ways in which creative writing practices have become more institutionalized. I didn't come out of a culture of creative writing programs; the first time I set foot in a creative writing workshop was when I came to the U.S. for my Ph.D. In the Philippines, we would sit and chat with writer friends, and exchange work in very informal settings. We'd certainly come together and have readings. But here, you take specific classes, you have genre concentrations,

you take a certain number of workshops, you do a thesis. I didn't become aware of that until I got here—so I'm sort of a late bloomer in respect to that aspect of creative writing culture.

I think it's getting to be a little bit more like that now in the Philippines. There are writing institutes—there's the Silliman National Writers' Workshop that the late Edilberto Tiempo and his wife Edith, both writers, started at Silliman University in 1962. They were products of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, and when they returned to the Philippines, they started a similar version of an annual national writers' workshop, to which they invited leading writers in several genres—poetry, fiction, nonfiction, playwriting—to come and teach budding writers. It is considered the leading national writer's workshop. But even when I was in the Philippines, I never was involved in it until after I returned from my Fulbright Program (I was invited as a panelist in 1997).

As a writer based in Baguio, as opposed to the writers in Manila at that time, I felt like I was pretty much working in isolation, with other local writers in the city. We'd talk informally and encourage each other, but there was nothing organized. I had the sense that the literary action, the center of publishing, was really in Manila—the way you'd think of New York, or making it on Broadway. Since then, there is more of a spread in focus, and people are more aware of the various regional centers of literature. There's more emphasis on cultivating the vernacular languages and making sure that writers in regional centers don't get overlooked.

VL Did you make a conscious choice to write in English?

LAI When I was growing up, at home we spoke three languages simultaneously. English was

one of them. That's partly because of the historical conditions, not only of the Philippines as a former colony of the U.S., but also of Baguio, which was a hill station of the U.S. colonial government. A lot of people there grew up the same way, speaking English alongside Ilokano and Tagalog, which are the other languages I know. I would like to think I can claim English as a first language, too.

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VL I think it's wonderful to be able to learn so many languages when you're young. I wish everybody had that chance.

LAI We're trying that with our five-year-old. But it's difficult when we don't have a sense of a linguistic community around us (we don't have extended family here). We're trying to teach her, get books, but it's a different kind of immersion. I wonder when we can give her that first-hand experience.

But it really wasn't a conscious choice for me to write in English. I have always written in English. When I first arrived in the U.S. in 1992, some of the people in my Fulbright summer orientation program asked, upon finding out I was a poet, "Why don't you write in your own language?" I looked at them quizzically: "What do you mean?"

VL I was just wondering because some of the Filipino poets I've been reading talk about how much language is a political issue.

LAI No matter what language you write in, you make political statements. I can see how it could represent more of a conflict for people who have grown up here and didn't get a chance to learn much of a Filipino language, experiencing it as something that's in a sense torn away from them. But I never felt like English was either forced on me or taken away from me. I feel I can appropriate it freely. I'm certainly aware of the postcolonial issues surrounding the choice of language, but I feel that it's an instrument that we certainly should wield, because we have the facility to use it. It doesn't necessarily make me more or less Filipino. I don't feel that I am betraying anything, any idea of being Filipino, by using English. And I feel that my writing *is* political—I write about history, and I am also very concerned about the same issues that postcolonial writers describe. That body of subject matter is something that continues to interest me.

VL Is there a community of writers in Virginia or the United States in general with whom you feel particularly at home?

LAI I belong to an electronic listserv of Filipino writers called FLIPS (<http://www.uni.edu/gotera/flips/>). The name that the group has adopted is also interesting, because it is a "So what? Let me tell you some things you don't know" reappropriation of a word that has been used pejoratively or derogatively to refer to Filipinos (I read somewhere that in this type of usage, it was supposed to stand for "F----- Little Island People"). On FLIPS you learn a lot about what people are writing, what people are reading, whether there's any new stuff coming out and where.

The Secret Language

I have learned your speech,
Fair stranger; for you
I have oiled my hair
And coiled it tight
Into a braid as thick
And beautiful as the serpent
In your story of Eden.

For you, I have covered
My breasts and hidden,
Among the folds of my
surrendered
Inheritance, the beads
I have worn since girlhood.

It is fifty years now
Since the day my father
Took me to the school in Bua,
A headman's terrified
Peace-gift. In the doorway,
The teacher stood, her hair
The bleached color of corn,
Watching with bird-eyes.

Now, I am Christina.
I am told I can make lace
Fine enough to lay upon the
altar
Of a cathedral in Europe.
But this is a place
That I will never see.

I cook for tourists at an inn;
They praise my lemon pie
And my English, which they say
Is faultless. I smile
And look past the window,
Imagining father's and
grandfather's cattle
Grazing by the smoke trees.
But it is evening, and these
Are ghosts.

In the night,
When I am alone at last,
I lie uncorseted
Upon the iron bed,
Composing my lost beads
Over my chest, dreaming back
Each flecked and opalescent
Color, crooning the names,
Along with mine:
Binaay, Binaay.

Really good things have come out of it, like sharing strength in the community. Many of the people in this writers' group are aware of the problems confronted by writers of color, and specifically, of problems confronted by Filipino writers not just in Northern America but globally. For instance, the opportunities that may or may not be available to us because publishers think that we have no audience. It's a sort of catch-22 situation: "Why should we publish you if you have no audience? And if you have an audience, do they read?" We are told that blatantly time and time again. So we get together on that list and decide, "Well, if nobody's going to write our reviews and get them to the necessary places for us to be given more of an audience, then we'll write reviews for each other and try to get them in the proper places." That's one way of sharing strength. We also try to get Filipino writers invited to various cultural events, college lecture series, or literary festivals. We call each other, create panels, and look for opportunities where all of us can have a chance to both present our own work and see what we can do together. For instance, Reme Grefalda, editor of *Our Own Voice*, just organized a symposium in the Library of Congress on Carlos Bulosan on April 28 as part of a series to celebrate the one hundredth year of Filipino immigration to Hawaii.

VL You're an artist as well as a poet—you created excellent illustrations for both *Cordillera Tales* and *Cartography*, and your website says you like to paint. Do you feel a connection between the two forms of art? How far back does your art date? Did you ever consider a parallel career as an artist?

LAI I do like to paint. I don't always have time to finish what I start. In fact, I abandoned painting for a number of years because I'm so busy here with

family and trying to establish my professional roots in the area. I just picked it up again this past summer, after ten years.

My parents signed me up for art classes when I was little. There was a painting teacher at my old elementary school who gave lessons every Saturday afternoon for a minimal fee. It was so much fun, and he was very patient. When I was in college, I took classes in printmaking with Pandy Aviado and a workshop in traditional Japanese bookbinding with Nancy Pobanz. In the early years of my first marriage, I fell in love with the art form, and I still do a little bit every now and then.

I think the connection between poetry and art is that both are expressive mediums. Both art forms, the visual and the poetic, have to do with intangible things that you can't quite put a finger on—that sense of mystery that defines what's art and what separates it from, say, a newspaper or a bit of information.

VL Have you ever thought about illustrating more books? The illustrations in *Cordillera Tales* are excellent.

LAI I haven't done any pen and inks in a long time. Maybe I'll write some children's books in the future. I want to collaborate with my daughters, too. My oldest daughter in the Philippines also paints and writes; the two older girls who live with us here in Norfolk also write and are into graphic art. And my youngest describes herself as "a real artist."

VL How did you collect the stories for *Cordillera Tales*? Are they stories you grew up with?

LAI A lot of the stories came from research. I worked with interview transcripts collected by anthropologists in the area. Because of what they were, they weren't in a form that privileged

the narrative. Most of them were collected by missionary scholars. I thought they were wonderful, and I wanted to work with them to bring out the quality of story. I used a more contemporary idiom, and many of them came out very much like Aesop's fables—teaching stories or parables. I also tried to look for indigenous designs, for instance from local weaving or basketry, to use as elements in the illustrations.

VL Your poems seem equally informed by your own history and that of others. Indeed, “history” plays a role in many of your poems, as you not only reflect on and provide a new perspective for historical events, but also write from the fictionalized perspective of people in the past. Would you speak about the importance of history and memoir in your work?

LAI I really am very interested in history. After *Trill & Mordent*, I completed another manuscript that I still haven't found a publisher for. It's been making the rounds for the second year now. It's based on the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri—a large-scale exposition to which 1,100 indigenous people were transported from the Philippines to be part of the exhibit, alongside indigenous individuals from Japan and Egypt. They even sprang the Native American Indian chief Geronimo from jail, and made him whittle miniature bows and arrows that were sold for a copper penny apiece. The whole World's Fair centered on the idea of American progress and the superiority of the American lifestyle, as demonstrated through some artificial comparisons. Alongside the new toaster model, new cars, new lawnmowers, they would have the exhibits of indigenous people and reconstructions of their villages to show the progress from savagery to civilization. It's all very well documented. There are excellent books

on the subject. Robert W. Rydell's *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876–1916* has some great photographic reproductions. The manuscript that I wrote, *Bodies Robed in Dusky Brown*, has a section of poems on the Filipino exhibits at the fair. It's my commentary on what we do when we look at and appropriate things. And the other parts of the collection have to do with my reflections as a person today looking back at this history,

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trying to make sense of it, trying to use it to understand similar questions that I have at the moment. For instance, sometimes colleagues have asked me things like, “Do you know where I could get good house help?” I'm wondering what a question like that means. Am I being oversensitive, or is there something underlying their ability to ask me a question like that in the first place?

VL I know what you're saying. It's very offensive.

LAI Yes. So it's the World's Fair all over again. And the whole idea of being a democracy—it's something we all want. But people overlook the facts, the history. People have short memories, in other words.

History is also a big part of my new book project. I'm obsessed with this group of Filipino intellectuals, scholars, and artists who

went to Spain in the 1800s to study, to paint, to learn about art, to travel. Some of them were products of a mixed heritage, Spanish-Filipino, which may have allowed them a newfound mobility to see more of the world. It's fascinating to me how they encountered the same set of problems that Filipino-American writers today are struggling with. I want to know what they found out. I want to see if I can dialogue with them across this distance, and find out how they answered the same questions that I ask myself: “Who am I talking to? Who am I making art for? Who am I really addressing as my audience? What is my subject?”

One painter, Juan Luna, was part of that group, including José Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines. They were all part of the *ilustrados*, an educated class who used their talents for reform. Luna was very gifted, and his art teachers in Manila sent him to study in Spain. Not long after he arrived, he joined an art competition in Barcelona, the annual exposition, and won a gold medal for a mural called *Spoliarium*, depicting two defeated gladiators being dragged away from the arena and into a chamber where their bodies were to be stripped of arms and clothing (and often burned afterwards). It's not a very elegant subject, but it's painted in a high neoclassical style, and is set in Rome. So here was this Filipino painter, running away with one of the gold medals for a painting immersed in the classical tradition. What does this mean?

I want to find out more about this era and this group of people who went to Europe and discovered not only themselves and their talents, but also, it is said, helped to give birth to the idea of revolution. Rizal wrote about Spanish abuse, the corruption of the Spanish colonial government. Luna's painting was quickly co-opted by other

intellectuals and made to serve as a metaphor for Filipino nationalist sentiments. They read ideas into it that the painter himself may not have meant or intended; but even to this day he's considered part of the group of intellectuals who helped bring about the revolution against Spain, which was successful in throwing out the Spanish local government only to have this newfound freedom transferred to another colonial power after the Battle of Manila Bay.

VL So there you have both your history and art interests.

LAI That's right. I've been gathering research material, writing scholars abroad and in the Philippines. Everything I've found out has just increased my desire to write more about this subject. I guess it's partly because my poetry is also very much about place. And memory is definitely part of that, because history is a work of memory. But I don't want this history to be just facts in a book. I want it to be meaningful to the future as well as the present. What can I learn from history? What can it tell me about myself? I don't have any grand designs. But seeing a little bit more might mean that the next time around, things will be better. If not for me, then for my daughters' generation.

VL How long does it take you to write a poem?

LAI It depends. I revise a lot. But the fact that I'm a full-time mom, full-time professional, full-time faculty member, full-time everything makes me feel like I can't waste a single moment. There was a time when I used to complain about not having time to write, and I'd get miserable. With *Trill & Mordent*, I got so sick of hearing myself complain and feeling overburdened by all the different demands on my time that I said, okay, if the time I have left to do

my writing is the time after everything else is done, then I'm going to take that time.

I teach nights, so I usually come home at 10:15, have a very late dinner, then clean up and make lunches for the next day—all my nightly rituals. Then I can write. By then it's usually midnight. I wrote *Trill & Mordent* over a year, in spurts between midnight and whenever. I would sit at my computer, and if nothing came, I'd go to bed after an hour and a half. But when I was in the middle of something and felt I was getting some-

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where, I would sometimes pull an all-nighter, or write till four and be very bleary-eyed in the morning. Also, we have one car and share in ferrying duties, so I don't have the luxury to stay in bed. That's how this book got written.

I take whatever time I can, whenever I can. And you're always writing, anyway—when you're washing the dishes, or driving between home and daycare, your mind is still working on ideas for poems, for revisions, or for things to work on the next time. I bring a journal in my purse to take down notes.

VL How much of a poem gets written before you have a chance to set it down?

LAI Often a poem will start as an idea that's not fully developed; or really, it's more like a sense of an idea, a kind of hunch or intuition. Sometimes I don't really know until I start working what I

actually wanted to say about this idea I've been so excited about. I try to do something every day related to writing—taking notes, reading. I read every day, whether it's just a passage or a whole chapter. That's another way of developing ideas for whatever it is that eventually gets born. It's like allowing those subterranean currents in the mind or in memory to just keep moving; I follow as best as I can, and get very excited when the current takes me somewhere that reveals what it is I wanted to write about in the first place.

VL Your poetry collections seem to be intricately involved with theme. *Trill & Mordent*, for example, has several poems that deal explicitly with formal musical motifs, such as "The Goldberg Variations," "Trill and Mordent," and "Stairway to Heaven." Tantalizing hints of music wind their way through other poems, such as the aria in "Would You Give Up Your Life for Love?" In addition, the tonal shifts and emotions in the poems fluctuate up and down like the shape of these ornaments, dipping through grief and death and rising to life and love. Do you consciously compose poems to be included in a particular volume? At what point does the theme of a book resolve?

LAI Remember when that father and son went on a shooting rampage in the Baltimore/West Virginia area? The title poem of *Trill & Mordent* was actually triggered by that. When I look at the whole book now, I didn't realize until it came together how many musical references there were. All these associations became apparent only after the book was organized. I didn't know this when I was writing the individual poems; but I guess they come from the same sensibility, and my musical background must have been influential, too. I wrote the poems in that post 9/11 climate; and even if

the poem wasn't specifically about 9/11, I think what I was trying to say in *Trill & Mordent* is that we are all affected by this climate of anxiety; we're living in an age of terror. People are getting deployed; there's the fear of avian flu, and those riots in Paris. What do you do in the face of anxiety? Do you go into a hole and shut yourself up in a safe place and not come out again? I've heard people say how hard it was for them to do the normal things they enjoyed after 9/11, or after those sniper shootings, or after every event tinged with tragedy or trauma. But you need to find a way back to the experience of beauty and release, and I think that's what I was trying to say in this book.

VL *Cartography* is another book that focuses on a specific theme. In some ways, with its emphasis on preserving memories and reflecting on a place and its influence on people, it seems to carry on some of the mission of *Cordillera Tales*, and provides a synthesis between past and present. You stated in the preface to *Cartography*, "Because there are so many stories to tell, so many depths to plumb, it is possible that this collection may never be quite finished." Might *In the Garden of the Three Islands* be part of this continuation?

LA I In *Cartography*, I was preoccupied with the history of Baguio as a colonial hill station and how its history overlapped with indigenous communities' histories, with the intrusion of colonial forces. Since that's where I grew up, I felt very close to this history, even if I'm not of indigenous blood (that is, I am not descended from the indigenous tribes that were the original settlers in Baguio and the surrounding Cordillera region).

In the Garden of the Three Islands is still part of the journey. I wrote it just after I came to the United States. This was my Ph.D. thesis. In it I looked back at where I came

Trill and Mordent

... we [are] wrong to think of beauty
As those things we'll never have.
—Stephen Frech

Accidentals are symbols that change the pitch
with just the slightest touch of dissonance

in music—the flats, the sharps, the double
sharps' spiked banners that appear sometimes once

on a page, sometimes in a series. Ascending or descending
they become *appoggiatura*—trills or mordents. The trills

are as random birdsong strewn over a field. The mordents
slip down, enough to remind me of their root in morbid

things, in falling, in death. The French, too, remind us
how even in pleasure the body dies a little: *la petite mort*.

The furtive kiss on the earlobe, the flick of a tongue
at the base of the throat—thin blade of a shudder that rises

to the heart and nicks it like a wound, that attaches
like a shadow. It takes so little to upset the mechanism

of everyday life, the rapid adjustment and tumbling of gears
from one set of teeth to another. As though the hand could choose

without error, the composer made these precise marks on sheets
of music. They bristle like little reports, like explosions

from the snout of a rifle angled through the window of a van,
aimed at any head smooth as the next one that steps

out on a veranda, out of a building; that stoops
momentarily to tie a shoelace, to fumble for car keys.

Now the news every day is filled with how little
it takes to ignite the blunt wick of fear.

Late in the year, the body's fat thickens like tallow.
Ungathered fruit redden and fall in the yard,

and the afternoons descend a little faster toward night.
Who can blame the one who becomes tired of the brooding

darkness, who wants to open the window and move
toward the leaves' quick gesturings, to see what voice

repeats her name in a way she has not heard
since childhood, to discover which room in her body

houses the accidental sound of a tuning fork
struck and echoing in the middle of her life.

from, looked at my new landscapes in America, and found things that reminded me of the other continent. My publisher wanted to include some poems from *Cartography* to introduce my voice to an American audience.

When we were preparing the galley, someone asked whether the three islands was a reference to the three island groups of the Philippines. I said, "No, absolutely not." It hadn't even occurred to me. The title poem actually refers to the Japanese garden in the Chicago Botanic Garden, "The Garden of the Three Islands." The woman who asked me the question was reading diagrams into the work that I hadn't even considered at that point. But that's fine because it leads to a more expansive reading.

VL You speak several different languages, both artistically and literally. You've also lived in two countries and had two marriages and two mothers. Has this unforeseen multiplicity shaped your poetry?

LAI The duality, the multiplicity, definitely affects my poetry. If you're a writer, you do get pulled toward that, attracted toward that idea of duality, because it is what attracts you to language. The idea of language as not just attentive to the surface matter of experience, but to the other things that might lie underneath, is why we write.

VL Your list of awards and grants is so impressive. How did you win your first few awards? Do your awards have any impact on the way you approach your work?

LAI Well, my first-ever award was the Palanca in 1984. I had just joined the faculty of the University of the Philippines at that time, and the other professors had some familiarity with my writing from having had me in their undergraduate classes.

A number of them had told me I was "ready." I was scared, but they kind of forced me to turn in my poems for consideration. They told me to just think of it as a way to get more experience. So I did, after much bullying. I didn't really believe what they were saying. It was last-minute, too, because I was very hard to persuade. So I nearly fainted when I got this phone call saying that I was tied for first place. It was my first attempt, and I won first. There was a little bit of a sense of pressure after that. It felt for a while like I was the object of

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like I was the object
of scrutiny; all these
people were now
looking at me....**

scrutiny; all these people were now looking at me, whereas before I pretty much could go undetected. I sometimes get a similar sensation after I've written something that I feel is successful: it's almost like a kind of death. Partly it is because I feel that poetry is mystery, an intangible magic that I approach again and again in the hopes that I might be able to learn some of its lessons well. When I do feel I have managed to write a poem that succeeds, I feel that it can't have been only because of me. I ask myself, "Will I ever be able to do this again?" I'm so afraid that I can't do it again.

VL You've been teaching at ODU since 1998. What drew your interest in coming to work for ODU? What changes have you seen in the program since you arrived? What part have you played in its development?

LAI I was hired to help create Filipino-American studies initiatives at ODU. To date, we still don't have a department that might house a Filipino-American Studies major or minor. There is no Ethnic Studies Department. There is the Institute for Race and Ethnicity; but as far as minors are concerned, they only have the African-American studies track. The Filipino American community here made a significant contribution to the university—something like \$100,000—to secure university commitment to infusing curricular content with Filipino-American studies material. I was hired in the fall of 1998 to help do this; but since there was no ethnic studies base, I was housed in a home department commensurate to my main field or background—the English Department. What started as a visiting appointment turned into a tenure track appointment in 2000. I'm now doing the last stages of my final tenure review.

The Tidewater area has been described to me as having the largest population of Filipino-Americans on the Eastern seaboard. A few years ago, it was estimated that there were maybe 700 or 800 Filipino-American students at ODU. But we're still at an interim stage, because the classes are not as large as what we'd like to see. There are a lot of well-attended programs on the West coast; they have a lot more time invested there, because California has historically been very much part of the landscape of Filipino immigration in this country. The interest in Filipino-American studies has had a much longer time to grow and take root. It's just starting here. So the numbers will probably come eventually.

A semester after I arrived, they hired a director for the Filipino American Center at ODU, which helps to liaise with the community and students. What I try to do is

work with existing structures at the same time that I look for opportunities to propose initiatives. For instance, I teach courses on women writers for the Women's Studies Department; so when I'm given two sections of the same course, I'll turn one into a special focus course on Filipina writers. In that way, I get to infuse Filipino culture. I also started an Asian-American literature class which is now about four years old, and I make sure there is a significant unit on Filipino-American literature.

VL What was school like in the Philippines when you were growing up? Was grade school taught in English, Tagalog, or regional languages?

LAI My elementary school was run by Belgian nuns and priests who were themselves away from home, in exile. It was a private Catholic school, but I don't think Catholic and private meant the same thing then in the Philippines as they do here. I was classmates with both the janitor's daughter and the mayor's daughter. There may even have been some kind of socialized tuition scheme. I think the only differences between that and the public school were the kinds of resources that we had and the fact that we had religious education. I went to Holy Family Academy in Baguio for elementary school, and I went to high school there for a year as well until my father decided he wanted me to have some exposure to a more liberal environment—by which he meant the University of the Philippines, where he had gone to school. So I went to the University of the Philippines for high school and college. My M.A. was earned at the Ateneo de Manila University, a Jesuit university.

English was the medium of instruction. The nuns and priests in my grade school would fine us five centavos for any word we spoke in

the vernacular while we were at school. So there's your oppressive colonial language.

VL Did you get to study Filipino authors, or did you have to study mostly English literature?

LAI I don't think I read as many Filipino authors until I went to high school. My college literature classes were really quick surveys. Primarily it was because of the difficulty in sourcing the textbooks. We'd read excerpts of *Moby Dick* or Faulkner, not the whole

I would try to make more copies available, but the toner was watered down to stretch the ink further, and the copies were very blurry, barely legible.

thing. There'd be forty of us in a class, sharing one really faded photocopy of articles in the library, even when I was teaching. I would try to make more copies available, but the toner was watered down to stretch the ink further, and the copies were very blurry, barely legible. Forty people would be sharing this, but nobody complained.

My parents' generation may have been weaned on more of the Western canonical tradition; but when I was going to high school and college, it was after martial law, and people were debating the meaning of nationalism, and wondering whether to turn the educational system into a bilingual one. There were many who felt very strongly about the use of Tagalog or Filipino instead of English. People joked about whether they should file their taxes in the vernacular or in English, and pondered the best

way to translate technical and scientific subjects into the vernacular. Perhaps because of that I had a chance to be immersed in more Filipino material as part of the sensibility of trying to bring more texts from regional authors to the attention of kids in school. Nevertheless, English is not going to go away as a universal language.

Some of my poet friends in Manila were telling me about projects that have been done to encourage awareness of traditional poetic forms. In order to help generate interest, they had this bright idea of sponsoring a poetry contest using traditional poetic forms, but having kids submit their poems through the cell phone texting feature. Very innovative. Of course afterwards, the kids then know better what *tanagas*, *salawikain*, or other poetic forms are. I believe they received a really enthusiastic response, and afterwards collected the submissions into a little anthology. And the *Textanaga/Dalitex/Dionatex/Textsawikain* is now an annual contest.

I hear that they're also bringing back the old poetic jousts, like the *balagtasan*. These are traditional, in high Tagalog. They are extemporaneous verbal jousts, with one poet responding to another. It is like a poetic debate on a given subject. It was very popular in the 1700s and 1800s, and now they're bringing them back.

VL What advice would you give librarians seeking to build a Filipino literature collection and give it greater visibility, in addition to the books you've recommended to me? [See the following article, "Serving Your Filipino-American Community," for these and other resources.]

LAI Build a library network with links to existing Filipino databases, Filipino-American literature, Filipino writers, and Filipino literature in general. There are some

good Filipino literature websites that have some of the largest hits worldwide. They are organized beautifully, and are very informative. There are articles, poems, plays, author bios, criticism, news on conferences and where people are giving presentations. There are also some really popular sites, like the Filipino Golden Links (*Tanikalang Ginto*) website, that cover everything from cooking to books to travel. There are also lots of organizations in the U.S. and globally. That's a great start. And then there are things you're already doing,

like the multicultural programs that were offered through the Newport News Public Library System

**I wish this wouldn't just
happen during Asian
Heritage Month or Filipino
Heritage Month....**

last year [see "Cultures Come Together at the Newport News Public

Libraries," pages 7–9]. You can get in touch with local communities and look for resources and people to come in and give presentations.

And I wish this wouldn't just happen during Asian Heritage Month or Filipino Heritage Month, when it's just one of those interesting things that we only think about once a year. There is so much value to exploring cultural heritage and encouraging people to think about it as an organic part of their own lives and community experience. **VI**

Guidelines for Submissions to *Virginia Libraries*

1. *Virginia Libraries* seeks to publish articles and reviews of interest to the library community in Virginia. Articles reporting research, library programs and events, and opinion pieces are all considered for publication. Queries are encouraged. Brief announcements and press releases should be directed to the *VLA Newsletter*.
2. Please submit manuscripts via email as attachments in Microsoft Word, rich text, or plain text format. Articles should be double-spaced with any bibliographic notes occurring at the end of the article. Please avoid using the automatic note creation function provided by some word processing programs.
3. Articles in *Virginia Libraries* conform to the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* and *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*. Accepted articles are subject to editing for style and clarity. Authors will be consulted on points of fact.
4. All articles submitted for consideration are reviewed by the editors and may be refereed by the editorial board. Articles that are not selected for publication will be returned within three months.
5. VLA holds the copyright on all articles published in *Virginia Libraries*. Contributors of articles receive two copies of the issue in which their work appears.
6. Illustrations are encouraged and should be submitted whenever appropriate to accompany a manuscript. Hard copy illustrations will be returned if requested in advance. Digital images should have a resolution of at least 300 dpi. Authors are responsible for securing legal permission to publish photographs and other illustrations.
7. Each contributor should provide a brief sketch of professional accomplishments of no more than fifty words that includes current title, affiliation, and email address. Unless specified otherwise, this information will be shared with readers of *Virginia Libraries*. Physical addresses should also be provided for the mailing of contributor's copies.
8. Articles should generally fall within the range of 750–3,000 words. Please query the editors before submitting any work of greater length.
9. Email manuscripts and queries to Cy Dillon, cdillon@ferrum.edu, and C. A. Gardner, cgardner@hampton.gov. Please be sure to copy both editors.
10. *Virginia Libraries* is published quarterly. The deadlines for submission are: December 15 for Number 1, January/February/March; March 15 for Number 2, April/May/June; June 15 for Number 3, July/August/September; and September 15 for Number 4, October/November/December. **VI**

Serving Your Filipino-American Community

by C. A. Gardner (with reading suggestions by Luisa A. Igloria)

The rich literary tradition of the Philippines encompasses a multiplicity of languages; Tagalog, Spanish, and English are but a few. Poets and writers in the Philippines have made successive colonial languages their own and have shared their talents with the world as part of the ongoing Filipino diaspora. Written Filipino literature stretches back to 1610 with the first book by a native Filipino to be published in the Philippines, *Librong Pagaaralan nang manga Tagalog nang uicang Castila* by Tomas Pinpin. In 1880, Pedro Alejandro Paterno's *Sampaguitas y Otras Poesias Varias* became the first book of poetry by a Filipino ever published in Europe; and in 1905, the first published Filipino poems in English appeared in *The Filipino Students' Magazine* in California.¹ Today, Filipino literature in English is published at least as frequently in the United States as in the Philippines.

With an estimated 60,000 Filipino-Americans living in Virginia alone², many public libraries, especially in the coastal regions, have a sizeable Filipino patron base. The following resources provide a starting point for a collection that addresses the varied and unique experiences faced by members of a cultural heritage that has survived invasion by Spain, the United States, and Japan—a heritage that continues to exert its own identity in the face of the lingering cultural dominance of the first two.

For too long, Filipino contributions to literature in English have been overlooked amid the flood of publications available in the United States, despite the awards and praise given to individual works. Today, an increasing number of anthologies and bibliographies help to rectify this oversight, and libraries can help as well. In addition to providing material that addresses the Filipino-American experience as nothing else can, a collection of Filipino-American literature can help to expand the literary horizons of all your patrons.

Books

The following offer a good foundation for a collection of modern Filipino fiction, poetry, and memoirs. These selections include some of the most vibrant voices in modern Filipino literature, including popular and award-winning authors; but this list is by no means comprehensive. Many other fine examples can be found in the bibliographies, recommended resources, and author biographies found in the following books, particularly the edited collections.

Barot, Rick. *The Darker Fall: Poems*. Louisville, Ky.: Sarabande Books, 2002. ISBN 1-889330-73-6.

Carbó, Nick. *Andalusian Dawn: Poems*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Cherry Grove Collections, 2004. ISBN 1-9323-3944-2.

Carbó, Nick, ed. *Pinoy Poetics: A Collection of Autobiographical and Critical Essays on Filipino and Filipino American Poetics*. San Francisco: Meritage Press, 2004. ISBN: 0-9709179-3-7.

Carbó, Nick, ed. *Returning a Borrowed Tongue: Poems by Filipino and Filipino American Writers* (cover subtitle: *An Anthology of Filipino and Filipino American Poetry*). Minneapolis, Minn.: Coffee House Press, 1995. ISBN 1-56689-043-8.

Carbó, Nick. *Secret Asian Man*. Chicago, Ill.: Tia Chucha Press, 2000. ISBN 1-882688-24-4.

Carbó, Nick and Eileen Tabios, eds. *Babaylan: An Anthology of Filipina and Filipina American Writers*. San Francisco, Calif.: Aunt Lute Books, 2000. ISBN 1-879960-59-1.

Francia, Luis H. *Eye of the Fish: A Personal Archipelago*. New York: Kaya Press, 2001. ISBN 1-885030-31-2.

Gamalinda, Eric. *The Empire of Memory*. Metro Manila, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 1992. ISBN 971-27-0264-2.

Gamalinda, Eric. *Zero Gravity: Poems*. Farmington, Maine: Alice James Books, 1999. ISBN 1-882295-20-X.

Hagedorn, Jessica. *Dream Jungle*. New York: Viking, 2003. ISBN 0-670-88458-8.

Igloria, Luisa A., ed. *Not Home, But Here: Writing from the Filipino Diaspora*. Metro Manila, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 2003. ISBN 971-27-1358-X.

Melvin, Reine Arcache. *A Normal Life and Other Stories*. Manila, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Office of Research and Publications, 1999. ISBN 971-550-251-2.

Nezhukumatathil, Aimee. *Miracle Fruit: Poems*. Dorset, Vermont: Tupelo Press, 2003. ISBN 0-9710310-8-8.

Roley, Brian Ascalon. *American Son: A Novel*. New York: Norton, 2001. ISBN 0-393-32154-1.

Rosal, Patrick. *Uprock Headspin Scramble and Dive: Poems*. New York: Persea Books, 2003. ISBN 0-89255-293-X.

Strobel, Leny Mendoza. *Coming Full Circle: The Process of Decolonization among Post-1965 Filipino Americans*. Quezon City, Philippines: Giraffe Books, 2001. ISBN 971-8832-43-2.

Villanueva, Marianne. *Mayor of the Roses: Stories*. Oxford, Ohio: Miami University Press, 2005. ISBN 1-881163-46-6.

Villanueva, Marianne, and Virginia Cerenio, eds. *Going Home to a Landscape: Writings by Filipinas*. Foreword by Rocio G. Davis. Corvallis, Ore.: CALYX Books, 2003. ISBN 0-934971-84-6.

Links

The following are good places to start when creating a webpage or resource guide. While a number of the links focus on Filipino literature, others, such as *Tanikalang Ginto: Golden Chains*, cover a wide range of subjects of interest to the Filipino-American community.

Cultural Center of the Philippines
<http://www.culturalcenter.gov.ph/>

Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines (Washington, D.C.)
<http://www.philippineembassy-usa.org/index.htm>

Includes "Culture & Arts,"
<http://www.philippineembassy-usa.org/about/culture.htm>

Filipino American Center, Old Dominion University
<http://al.odu.edu/filipino/>

Filipino American National Historical Society
<http://www.fanhs-national.org/>

Filipino American Resources
http://www.seattleu.edu/lemlib/web_archives/Filipino/biog.html

FLIPS, an E-mail Discussion List for Filipino Writers
<http://www.uni.edu/gotera/flips/>

Likhaan Online: The University of the Philippines Institute of Creative Writing
<http://www.upd.edu.ph/~icw/index.htm>

National Commission for Culture and the Arts: Empowering the Filipino Imagination
<http://www.ncca.gov.ph/>

The Philippine Cultural Center of Virginia
<http://www.philippineculturalcenterofva.org/>

Tanikalang Ginto: Golden Chains (Philippine-Related Sites)
<http://www.filipinolinks.com/>

Your Portal to Philippine Literature
<http://www.panitikan.com.ph/>

Notes

¹ Nick Carbó, "A Literary Timeline," in *Pinoy Poetics: A Collection of Autobiographical and Critical Essays on Filipino and Filipino American Poetics* (San Francisco: Meritage Press, 2004), xii-xiii.

² "Little Manila: Virginia," in *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia* [online encyclopedia] 12 May 2006 [cited 18 May 2006]; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Manila. **vi**

Tower of Babel? Upstairs, Meeting Room 2

by Caroline Fitzpierce and Denise Morgan

No experience teaches the value of communication and the power of the spoken word quite like visiting a country where one cannot speak the language. Imagine, then, what challenges must face new Americans who have immigrated without mastery of English, let alone command of the distinct American version of the tongue. Data since the 2000 census indicate that immigrants account for twelve percent of our total population, the highest percentage in eighty years.¹ Young children learn English in school and from their playmates, but adults often have a more difficult time learning the language.

Employed adults may not have opportunities on the job to practice English skills or the time to meet English-speaking people outside their family and work groups. Unemployed adults may be isolated by family responsibilities or have no particular need to reach beyond

their comfort sphere. Assimilation is hard for these individuals. Samuel P. Huntington, in his book *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*, discusses both a

Fairfax County ... residents speak ninety- two languages....

historical view and current trends in assimilation in the United States (see, in particular, pages 158-170).

Fairfax County, whose residents speak ninety-two languages, is the most linguistically diverse county in Virginia, according to statistics published by the U.S. English Foundation.² Seven branches of the Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL), as well as other libraries, large and small, public and academic, have begun to offer assistance through

English conversation groups. These groups are frequently led by volunteers. While no particular training is required, this article will share some personal experiences for librarians wishing to consider such a program.

Conversation Leader

The best person for this job is someone who understands how it feels to live in another culture, speaking a new language. The person may have broad travel experience or have lived in non-English-speaking

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Patrons gather to practice English.

situations. Ideally, the conversation leader may have some teaching experience or other experience in managing groups of people. Volunteers who serve in this capacity often indicate that they get more out of it than the students do!

Commitment to a regular schedule is very important, so team teaching is strongly recommended to maintain continuity. Team leadership will permit one leader to miss a session without disappointing students or imposing on library staff. Building rapport and reliability with the group is essential. Indeed, the group leaders may be the only "Americans" to whom students can bring a question or problem.

The best leader will listen carefully and encourage the group to talk. Group-inclusive activities as well as activities for pairs should be part of each session. The group should not become a forum for the leader, nor should an outspoken student monopolize the discussion. Indeed, the focus here is on culture and skill-building as well as conversation. Even people who can speak the language well might be looking for help to see the humor in our comic strips or to make sense of our idioms. For instance, one of the authors had the experience of explaining, in the context of giving her medical history to a young physician from India, that her status as an "English major" had nothing to do with the army of Great Britain. While the leader is not expected to teach English in the traditional sense, obvious errors should be gently corrected. A dictionary and basic grammar book should always be available.

Our experience has shown that leaders may be recruited by appropriate signage in the library that hosts the conversation group. Signs should state the preferred qualifications; then it is up to the library staff to be selective. Choose a team that will work well together, and be

sure to put the members in contact with colleagues in nearby branches if you can.

Training

Someone who speaks fluent English has met the most essential job requirement, though it is good to have a leader who does not have a strong regional accent. The leader's speech should be similar to others in the locale.

A tour of the library where the group meets should be provided for leaders.

The location of basic English materials would be a priority stop on the orientation. Other important areas would be books and audiobooks that might be considered "easy reading." Information about library cards, as well as library and community activities, should be included. A staff librarian should be designated as a point of contact who can assist in getting materials, scheduling rooms, and acting as a guest presenter on certain topics (for example, the relevant page of your library website).

Tom Mason, an experienced conversation group leader, has prepared an online guide for conversation teachers. He makes the point that the most important part of the teacher's job is to make friends and to represent America. This is an important difference from the teacher who issues grades, enforces classroom rules of attendance, and maintains a certain distance. Other resources listed in Mason's bibliography will help get the program started in your library by providing suggestions for activities.³

Libraries sponsoring conversation groups are advised to investigate local schools, government agencies, and community organizations for training opportunities. Adult Education programs and community colleges may offer classes with professional teachers who have English for Speakers of

Other Languages (ESOL) expertise. In our case, Fairfax County residents wishing to improve their English in a more formal way have several options. Some companies such as Hyatt Hotels and Wendy's (in Northern Virginia) offer English as a second language to employees. On the FCPL "Information for New Americans" webpage, our Living in the U.S. Customer Service team has posted listings of classes in local schools and houses of worship as well as audiovisual materials the library owns that will help English language learners (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/ell/>). In addition, the Fairfax County Public Schools classes for adults are listed at <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/OACE/ESOL/schedule.html>.

Both libraries and group leaders should build a network of contacts with community social services. Referrals for housing, healthcare, childcare, and job search support are very important. Perhaps the most important contacts for group leaders are with leaders of other groups to share ideas and techniques.

Materials

Most libraries have at least a small collection of ESOL materials for use by English language learners. For libraries using the Dewey system, check 640 for items on daily life in the United States, 428.3 for idiom materials, and 302 for conversation activities and topics.

More advanced students might enjoy the challenge of a book group. Some libraries have boxed sets of easy-to-read books with cassettes to listen to while reading along.

Easy English News, a monthly newspaper, provides timely news articles and activities at about a fourth-grade level. Students enjoy the crossword puzzles and idiom studies.

Activities

Learning can occur in social situations away from the regular meeting place. In one library, the group leader held a baby shower for a group member in her home. Two library staff members also attended. The students learned vocabulary, some American traditions, and the concepts of paid staff and volunteer staff. The attending staff learned that “volunteering” is not always a familiar concept in other ethnic communities.

Holidays provide wonderful opportunities for learning history and culture and for having fun. The members of one conversation group were up to their elbows scraping out pumpkins and listening to scary stories during a Halloween party when the library lights went out. That was really scary!

Several websites have activities for ESOL students that might be useful for conversation leaders, too. Over time, groups develop their own personalities. Give them opportunities to report on newspaper stories, put on skits, or share books they have read and enjoyed.

Meeting Space

A comfortable room compatible with the size of the group is essential. A few people in a large room can be intimidating. A room with a table in the center with chairs drawn up around it is good. Ideally, the group should be kept small so that each person may have the opportunity to speak. Provide a chalkboard or whiteboard to write words, draw pictures, sketch maps, and otherwise illustrate ideas.

Publicity

In our community, little publicity is needed. A sign announcing English conversation groups in the library may be enough. A notice in local

newspapers or on a community bulletin board will also be effective. Most groups start small, but the word seems to spread throughout the community, attracting others. As the group grows, classroom management techniques become important.

Benefits

The library benefits by attracting new library cardholders and customers. Learning English makes for stronger families and communities by educating individuals and preparing them for work. With luck, these new neighbors may become new volunteers to help in the effort to reach out to others in ways of which the staff is unaware. Huntington makes the point that it is the motivated individual who chooses to leave his homeland for another country.⁴ While public libraries might not have been traditional in their countries of origin, this partnership of “student” and “teacher” provides another stepping stone to success for both parties.

Spanish is the language of three of the countries who send the most immigrants to the United States (Mexico, El Salvador, and Cuba).⁵ Perhaps someone in the English conversation group might have a contact person who could assist the library by offering a Spanish conversation group as well.

Other benefits are less predictable. One attractive au pair was introduced to a library staff member from the same country. When the au pair met the staffer’s son, a relationship developed that led to a wedding. Who knows what can happen at your library?

For many of us, one of the attractions of a career in public libraries is the opportunity to perceive and address the needs of our communities. A look at your neighborhoods will convince you that the need to help our newest neighbors learn

our common language is one that libraries have the heart to address.

Notes

¹ Steven A. Camarota, “Economy Slowed, But Immigration Didn’t,” in *Backgrounder* [journal online] November 2004 [cited 12 October 2005]; available from <http://www.cis.org/articles/2004/back1204.html>.

² U.S. English Foundation, “Most Linguistically Diverse Counties,” in *Many Languages, One America* [report online] 2005 [cited 26 October 2005]; available from <http://www.usefoundation.org/foundation/research/lia/>.

³ Tom Mason, *The Online Conversation Leader Handbook* [handbook online] 1 May 1999 [cited 12 October 2005]; available from <http://www.afn.org/~afn49566/index.htm>.

⁴ Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 189–192.

⁵ Camarota.

Additional Resources

To see how large metropolitan libraries address these issues, visit:

- Hennepin County, Minnesota, <http://www.hclib.org/worldlinks/>
- Queens Library, New York, <http://www.queenslibrary.org/>

Other useful websites:

- *Dave’s ESL Café*, <http://www.eslcafe.com/>
- *Easy English News*, <http://www.elizabethclaire.com/een/eenmain.html>
- Hello America, Inc., <http://www.hellousa.com/>
- *Interesting Things for ESL Students*, <http://www.manythings.org/>
- *Life in the USA*, <http://www.lifeintheusa.com/>
- U.S. English Foundation, Inc., <http://www.usefoundation.org/foundation/default.asp> 

Needs Assessment for Undocumented Individuals

by Christopher K. Richardson

The undocumented are not a distinct or homogeneous population, but a diverse and often amorphous set of individuals who share a common problem: they lack important documents. Perhaps they lack a driver's license because they do not speak enough English (or Spanish, in some cases) to pass a written examination. They may find it difficult to prove residency because they do not have homes, or difficult to establish credit because they do not have jobs. They may not have bank accounts because they just arrived from another country, or they may be hesitant to apply for such because they have entered or remained in a country without government permission. Some lack a work visa or permanent residency document. Some women live in temporary shelters for survivors of domestic abuse and do not establish permanent addresses or acquire documentation because they are in danger of physical violence if their location is discovered.

It is possible to speak of the characteristic needs of undocumented immigrants, migrants, refugees, homeless individuals and families, and domestic abuse survivors; but these categories often overlap, and they do not capture the full range or complexity of individual life scenarios. A report released by the Pew Hispanic Center in March of 2005 titled *Estimates of the Size and Characteristics of the Undocumented Population* included over forty pages of statistical charts

based on the U.S. Census Bureau's March 2004 Current Population Survey; but even this report dealt only with "the population of foreign-born persons living in the United States without proper authorization."¹ It also used the term "undocumented migrants" interchangeably with "the undocumented population." The Associated Press, in its description of the report, spoke of undocumented *immigrants*, stating that "the nation's undocumented immigrant population surged to 10.3 million last year, spurred largely since 2000 by the arrivals of unauthorized Mexicans in the United States" and adding that "assuming the flow of undocumented immigrants into the country hasn't abated since March 2004, the population is likely near 11 million now."² By referring to this group as "the undocumented population," the Pew report ignored undocumented individuals who are not foreign-born.

Besides indicating relative degrees of specificity, one's choice of terminology with regard to undocumented individuals can also reflect political bias. An article in the August 1, 2003, issue of *Library Journal*, for example, described a legislative initiative in Arizona that would "require state and local government workers to check the immigration status of everyone seeking public services."³ The group sponsoring the initiative, called *Protect Arizona Now*, spoke of "illegal aliens,"⁴ while sources critical of the initiative, such as

the *Arizona Republic*, used the term "undocumented immigrants," arguing that the proposed legislation would prevent them from receiving, among other things, library cards.⁵ Catholic bishops from Arizona and New Mexico opposed the proposal, citing "intense rhetoric" and the possibility that "all kinds of public benefits would be denied undocumented workers."⁶ *Library Journal* published an article in late 2004 reporting not only that the legislation, now passed, made it a crime for public employees to provide services to undocumented workers, but also that Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard had stated that the law only applied to welfare benefits.⁷ As legislative battles continue in Arizona and elsewhere, the line between terminology and rhetoric remains indistinct.

One unfortunate consequence of contemporary political rhetoric is that debate tends to focus less on the problems of undocumented individuals and more on the prob-

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lems that they are purported to cause for others. Most attention is given to the issue of public services for undocumented immigrants/migrants. Initiatives in Kansas⁸ and California⁹ aim to deny driver's licenses to undocumented workers in the name of discouraging illegal immigration. In 2004, Republican Congresswoman Dana Rohrabacher (CA) introduced the Undocumented Alien Medical Assistance Amendments designed to diminish the cost of providing emergency health care for undocumented immigrants/migrants. It would require hospitals "to determine the citizenship, immigration, and financial status of these individuals, as well as obtain employer information and biometric identifiers such as fingerprints," which, according to the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, "would then be sent to the Department of Homeland Security to initiate deportation proceedings."¹⁰ In such cases, undocumented status (combined with fear of deportation) could lead to denial or neglect of medical care in emergencies.

Denial of library services may not seem terribly serious when compared to denial of medical services, but librarians take it seriously, and their writings on the subject, while still few, reflect both a broader understanding of the term "undocumented" than is evidenced in general literature and a clearer focus on the needs of undocumented individuals themselves. In November 2003, an ALA Presidential Advisory Committee listed "undocumented individuals and their advocates (immigrants, domestic abuse victims, homeless, etc.)" on a list of "major forces affecting grassroots library advocacy."¹¹ Patrice McDermott, deputy director of ALA's Office of Government Relations, published a report on the USA PATRIOT Act in June 2005 warning that congress had

passed an expansion of a driver's license/personal ID provision "which would prohibit states from issuing driver's licenses or IDs to illegal aliens, potentially excluding them from using publicly supported libraries."¹² Tracie D. Hall, director of ALA's Office for Diversity, published an editorial in the May–June 2005 issue of *Versed* (bulletin of ALA's Office for Diversity) called "Toward a Curriculum of Readiness," which described how, as branch manager of an urban public library, she had "faced every kind of harsh social reality" and had "come to know the interiors of so many lives—who was struggling with heroin; who was living with

**"It's outrageous that
we've got the library, of
all places, peddling porn."**

domestic abuse; who was hiding illiteracy; who was undocumented and coping with exploitative work conditions to make ends meet."¹³

Concerns for equal access and effective advocacy are prominent, but librarians who work to meet the needs of undocumented individuals can face political opposition, especially when it comes to collection management decisions. One example of such opposition emerged recently in the case of Denver Public Library's collection of fotonovelas. An article in the September 2005 issue of *American Libraries* reported that "in reaction to complaints from the anti-immigration group Colorado Alliance for Immigration Reform (CAIR), the Denver Public Library is reviewing the content of its collection of fotonovelas—Spanish-language fiction serials that tell stories through photos, drawings, and text."¹⁴ The article goes on to

explain that "the fotonovela flap seems to have grown out of CAIR's concern that DPL would attract undocumented Hispanic immigrants if it implemented a proposal to create language and learning centers with bilingual staff inside existing branches to expand Spanish-language collections and ESL and GED classes."¹⁵ There are other issues involved, including the fact that some fotonovelas depict nudity and violence, prompting a syndicated radio talk show host, standing outside of Denver's central branch, to call for the resignation of Denver City Librarian Rick Ashton, exclaiming, "It's outrageous that we've got the library, of all places, peddling porn."¹⁶ Ashton, however, "attributed the fotonovela controversy to 'anti-immigration sentiment,'" noting that "as other public libraries refine their service plans to reflect changing populations, 'they will experience some pushback from people who would like it to be different than it is.'"¹⁷ In the end, DPL cancelled four of its fourteen fotonovela subscriptions "because of their consistent portrayal of sexually explicit content."¹⁸

In light of the possibility of legal and/or PR-driven challenges, public librarians in particular need to base collection management decisions on solid community analysis. Political objections notwithstanding, though, the task of assessing the needs of undocumented individuals presents special difficulties. Standard practices of community analysis and needs assessment were not designed with undocumented individuals in mind and may, if not adapted appropriately, leave them out entirely. Few, if any, working models exist, but one example of relevant scholarly research is Julia Hersberger's *Everyday Information Needs and Information Sources of Homeless Parents: A Study of Poverty and Perseverance*.¹⁹ Given that many undocumented indi-

viduals are also homeless, and that homeless individuals/families are an especially neglected segment of "the undocumented population," Hersberger's findings provide a useful starting point.

Hersberger describes the homeless as "a group of information users ignored in the literature of Library and Information Science," adding that "library literature on the homeless has focused on this group as problem library patrons instead of information users."²⁰ Choosing to focus on the information needs and sources of homeless parents, she employed extended periods of participant observation to develop an interview guide, later interviewing twenty-eight residents from six family shelters in Indianapolis, Indiana, concerning their "perceived problems, needs, information needs, and information sources."²¹ She found, through content analysis of these interviews, that:

- 1) Information needs ranged from vague, process-based questions to the specific, and this specificity is tied to prior experience with homelessness.
- 2) The complex nature of problems leads to interconnected needs that must be dealt with in certain sequences in order for the primary problem to be resolved.
- 3) Homeless parents rely on information networking rather than formal information systems.²²

Because categories overlap, it is difficult to compare the needs of undocumented individuals to the needs of homeless individuals or to speak of the two groups in relation to each other. We could be speaking of the same individual or of an entirely different phenomenon, but several of Hersberger's findings seem applicable, in a general, descriptive sense, to the broad task of needs assessment for undocumented individuals. Undocument-

ed individuals, like the homeless, are often regarded as problem patrons, rather than as patrons with problems. Hersberger's criteria of specificity, complexity, interconnectedness, and relative formality/informality seem relevant given that undocumented individuals face unique, complex sets of survival challenges. Methodologically, Hersberger's examples of extended observation, first-person interviews, content analysis, and attention to social networking present alternatives to traditional methods of data collection such as surveys

**Undocumented
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and community forums.

Hersberger's research, especially her content analysis, makes use of the work of Brenda Dervin in *The Everyday Information Needs of the Average Citizen: A Taxonomy for Analysis*.²³ Dervin's general assumptions and findings include these essential ideas: "individuals want to control their own life environments"; "in the modern, technological world, information is essential for asserting this control"; "average citizens have difficulty in assessing and meeting their everyday information needs"; and, "by examining elements of the average citizen's information system and their linkages, a better understanding of how ordinary citizens attempt to assert control over these life environments will be reached."²⁴ Dervin's analytical taxonomy includes nineteen

categories of information need: finance, child care/relationships, housing, health, employment, education, transportation, public assistance, shelter, crime/safety, migration, law, housekeeping, family planning, recreation and culture, miscellaneous concerns, consumer concerns, discrimination concerns, and veteran concerns. Sixteen of Dervin's categories of need (all but the last three) emerged in the course of Hersberger's interviews. All seem relevant to the lives of undocumented individuals.

In terms of basic definitions and goals, needs assessment for undocumented individuals needn't be terribly different from needs assessment for other individuals. In both cases, needs assessment could be defined as "an attempt to gather, organize, and interpret information on the community's needs and interests."²⁵ One could argue, in the case of undocumented individuals, that it is difficult to speak of "the community" as a singular entity, and that one should focus more specifically on the needs and interests of individuals. This is as true for members of the general population, though, as it is for undocumented individuals. In other words, undocumented individuals are part of "the community," every member of which could rightly be regarded as an individual with distinctive information needs. A general definition of needs assessment is adequate for use with undocumented individuals, then, especially if interpreted in light of G. Edward Evans's three "laws" of collection development:

- 1) As the size of the service community increases, the degree of divergence in individual information needs increases.
- 2) As the degree of divergence in individual information needs increases, the need for cooperative programs of information materials sharing increases.

3) It will never be possible to completely satisfy *all* of the information needs of any individual or class of clientele in the service community.²⁶

Evans's definition of "needs" is also useful in grounding a practice of needs assessment for undocumented individuals. Needs, he writes, are "situations (community, institutional, or personal) that require solution," though "it does not always follow that a need is something the group or person wants."²⁷ "Interests" could be either needs or wants, depending on the situation.

Broadly speaking, then, needs assessment for undocumented individuals should aim to discover situations in the lives of undocumented individuals that require solution. The one need that all undocumented individuals share is a need for documentation, but this conclusion is not very helpful in and of itself. For one thing, undocumented individuals do not all need the same document(s), and documents differ greatly in terms of their requirements and uses. Second, in addition to documents themselves, undocumented individuals may need information *concerning* documentation, including the fact that they need it, *why* they need it, and how to acquire it. Third, need for documentation is rarely an isolated circumstance. It is usually part of a complex series of interconnected situations. Based on Hersberger's research, then, six more specific goals of needs assessment for undocumented individuals could be:

- 1) To understand an undocumented individual's own perception of need;
- 2) To assess an undocumented individual's prior experience of need, and its relation to current need/perception of need;
- 3) To contextualize an individual's need for documentation

by viewing it in relation to other needs;

- 4) To prioritize an undocumented individual's needs such that primary needs may be resolved in an efficient sequence;
- 5) To identify and evaluate information sources (formal and informal, individual and social) currently used by an individual; and
- 6) To identify and evaluate new, potential information sources relevant to an undocumented individual's actual and/or perceived needs.

Rather than suggesting that we assess undocumented individuals in relation to broad and oversimplistic categories (i.e. immigrants, migrants, refugees, homeless, abuse survivors), these goals urge researchers to acknowledge the importance of individual perception, experience, context, complexity, and resourcefulness.

Hersberger's research also models alternative, supplemental methods of data collection, organization, and interpretation, including extended observation, first-person interviews, content analysis, and social network mapping. Community forums and field surveys are not likely to produce usable results in the case of undocumented individuals, and social indicators are often skewed by researcher bias or vague terminology. Interaction with key informants, however, by means of extended observation and first-person interviews, is a feasible approach to data collection. Content analysis (including use of Dervin's analytical taxonomy) and social network mapping may be especially effective techniques for the organization and interpretation of data.

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Defining Images: Rethinking Outreach to New Americans

by Ann Friedman

Library service to new Americans is a challenge in every community in the commonwealth. Though the service is widely supported in the library community, limited resources make it difficult to implement and sustain a broad program. However, one might ask if such outreach efforts, more narrowly focused, might provide an opportunity for public libraries as they seek a defining image that will drive additional state funding.

As with most urban areas in Virginia, Arlington County has become increasingly diverse—from 4.3% of the population being foreign-born in 1960, to 28% in 2000. Only 27% of the foreign-born are naturalized citizens. The public schools work with sixty different languages in their classrooms. All of this is happening in a county of twenty-six square miles with one of the highest population densities in the United States. Like most densely populated urban areas, the county is experiencing the full range of urban challenges—from education to affordable housing to transportation issues to gang violence. The situation is made more complex because the county prides itself on being “socially committed” but has increasingly limited resources to make this commitment a reality.

During the past ten years, library outreach services in Arling-



Family programs with a cultural theme have been universally popular.

ton have mirrored best practices across the country in quality and scope, but not always in the quantity needed to make a substantial impact. The definition of outreach has been very broad, similar to the classic ALA definition that calls libraries to remove any and all barriers to service. Three county outreach centers provide small collections and services specifically designed to help new Americans and introduce the more comprehensive services and collections of the seven library branches. Programs and services in the library and through thirty active partnerships support early literacy. Bilingual story times, including the locally produced and broadcast series *Cuentos y Más*, attempt to cross lan-

guage barriers. There are reading clubs in all middle schools, including two in Spanish, and there is a reading club for adult new readers. The library system also offers two computer labs, and there is library-developed newcomer information on the county website. In addition to weekly cable programming in Spanish, the library participates in community cultural festivals. And

Ann Friedman served as director of Arlington Public Libraries from 1995 until 2006. She was president of the Virginia Public Library Director's Association in 1998, cochair of VLA's Legislative Committee from 2000–2004, and honored with VLA's George Mason Award in 2004.



Celebrating the Chinese New Year.

Right, Arlington libraries serve a diverse population.

there is a jail library, maintained long after it was legally mandated.

To make these services a reality, substantial attention has been paid to infrastructure. However, the challenges have frequently overwhelmed the best intentions. While all of the following are essential to an effective program, they require extensive and ongoing resource investment that is not always possible: recruitment and retention of bilingual staff, including pay differential; collections in all formats reflecting most native languages, as well as support for learning English; public awareness campaigns, including branding, nontraditional publicity and publicity channels, and signage; comprehensive staff training on multicultural awareness; and multiyear plans for finding and growing partnerships. To accomplish these goals, dedicated time and staff are essential. Without that investment,

it is clear that the service will not come close to matching the vision.

In Arlington County, though the library staff was committed, and did good work both individually and as a team, it became apparent in the last six months that it was time to step back and assess our outreach services. What had we learned?

- The vision is sound and its values are strongly supported. As stated in Arlington Public Libraries' *New Americans' Plan 2006*, "...information in its broadest definition can make a difference in one's life. The Library

- Broad cultural programs appear to have as much impact as skill-directed programs. Family programs with a cultural theme have been universally popular. However, it is difficult to determine if program participation leads to library use.
- Programs, particularly in their initial phases, appear productive, but tend to lose energy and focus over time.
- Computer access is a primary connector to the library. Many question whether it should be seen as an end in itself.



is committed to being Arlington's gateway to information—for every Arlingtonian. New Americans are a part of this vision: the collections, programs and services must be made accessible to them as they experience new lives in the Arlington community."

- Many services and programs are provided under many umbrellas, but the impact of any particular service or program is often unclear or undocumented. Evaluation techniques and metrics are not clearly defined, understood, or, in many cases, available for ready use.

- Staffing overall is, and will remain, limited. The library is staffed almost exclusively for in-library service, making outreach frequently problematic.
- Recruitment and retention of bilingual staff in a highly competitive labor market is problematic, thus creating a major barrier to effective service.
- Not all staff embrace the concept that service to new Americans is essential to the library's mission, particularly given competing priorities and the demands of more vocal customers (the "I am a taxpayer" syndrome).

- No brand or unifying concept is in place to describe the whole of outreach, making it difficult to grasp all that is covered. "Service to New Americans" does not seem adequate.
- Collections in world languages and ESL materials are popular, but it is impossible to include all languages present in the community. Marketing, merchandising, and signage are essential to ensure use, yet they are often employed on a hit-or-miss basis.
- Success is all about relationships. Personal contacts with partners; with the target audience, including those not yet in the library; with schools; with children; and with families are critical success factors, but difficult to build and maintain on a large scale.
- Partnerships allow libraries to reach into the community at places and times where people gather. However, the act of building and maintaining the relationships necessary for effective partnership is staff-intensive.
- Volunteers are difficult to recruit for outreach activities.
- Many staff members feel that outreach services should focus exclusively on providing connections to the library, where a full range of services are available, rather than serving as an end in themselves.

Given this assessment, two models of service were developed. The first was a broad service model focused on skill levels as well as culture, with all staff expected to own the service and participate actively in implementation. The second was a more limited and targeted service focused on skill-level development, particularly preliteracy skills for children. Staff felt that the second model had a greater chance of success because of its limited focus. However, the values expressed through the first model were so deeply embedded in the library's mission that we found

we could consider no other. No one was ready to narrow the library's focus.

Was anything achieved through this reexamination, given that the model of service did not change? We did target areas for further work to strengthen the program. These areas included metrics and evaluation tools, signage and marketing, clear definition of audiences, reevaluation of partnerships for value to the mission, and staff training. But most important, the program was refocused and reenergized through this reexamination.

**"This is who we are, and
this is what we contribute
to building community
across the commonwealth
today and every day."**

It is clear that planning and periodic reassessments will be required to keep energy high and the service focused for maximum impact.

A larger question emerges from this local examination. What the Arlington Public Libraries are experiencing is not unique. Everywhere in the commonwealth, libraries are attempting to reach out into the community to serve new Americans, particularly populations without public library experience. Though library missions almost universally embrace service to the unserved and the elimination of barriers, limited staffing and resources continue to lessen what can be done in most libraries. The work is important, but resource realities drive choices every day. No easy solutions are on the horizon; libraries may just have to struggle with current resources and refocus and reenergize frequently.

To view the challenge on a

macro level, public libraries in Virginia have struggled to find a defining image that would say to the governor and the general assembly, "This is who we are, and this is what we contribute to building community across the commonwealth today and every day." Is library service to new Americans that defining image? Would it encourage new and consistent state funding? Or, as I fear, is service to new Americans tainted by concerns in the larger political world about the "undocumented"? If so, is there a subset of this service, a narrower focus, which might provide a universal image and a positive message? And would this image and message lead to increased funding while still serving the library's broader focus?

Successful funding strategies are based on choosing a market niche with universal appeal, few negatives, and limited competitors or strong partners, and then marketing the initiative under a single brand across the state. And that niche in 2006 may well be early literacy in its broadest definition and application, such as seen in the governor-supported early learning initiative *Smart Beginnings*. Service to new Americans would be furthered by a well-funded early literacy program. At the same time, our local vision could continue to drive the broader local activities for new Americans of all ages and needs—always a work in progress and never enough. It is worth considering—and perhaps pursuing aggressively on a state level *now*. ■

Library Services for the Unemployed and the Institute for Information Literacy

by Otis D. Alexander

Since it opened in November 1910, the Danville Public Library has remained true to its primary mission to provide the materials necessary to meet the intellectual, cultural, social, and recreational needs of the Danville area community. The library is responsible for supporting the research endeavors of children, teens, and adult members of the community at large. To promote the infusion of knowledge, the library must acquire and maintain materials and provide services that adequately support the needs of the Danville population. From modest beginnings in an office in the lobby of the Rison Park School, the library has matured with the construction and renovation of the main building and the addition of the Clifton Street Branch in 1988.

With these facilities in place, and in harmony with the library mission, the Institute for Information Literacy at the Danville Library arose in response to the information needs of an increasing number of unemployed persons who had once worked in the tobacco industry and related fields in the Danville community. After many workers were laid off from jobs they had held for decades, they were left without adequate skills to enter a job pool now dominated by high technology. The unemployment rate for the Danville area, including Pittsylvania

County, jumped from 7% in November 2004 to 8.6% in December 2004—at that time the highest figure in the state of Virginia. In Danville proper, excluding Pittsylvania County, the jobless rate rose to 11.2% in December 2004. Of course, much of the blame resides with seasonal tobacco furloughs

After many workers were laid off from jobs they had held for decades, they were left without adequate skills to enter a job pool now dominated by high technology.

and some textile layoffs. However, in 2006, the economic conditions are still shaky. This is a clear indication that the unemployed need immediate information and training about new job possibilities.

Internet usage is rapidly increasing across all segments of the population, and the digital divide between affluent and low-income citizens is increasing by the hour. To compensate, Danville Public Library decided to offer basic computer skills classes, both to assist the unemployed and to raise

citizens' consciousness about their local public libraries' collections and services. With the approval of its parent city department, the Department of Human Services, the library released information about the Institute for Information Literacy to the local newspaper and television stations, with hopes that the news would reach the unemployed. Other interested community members were also accepted into the free program.

The institute provides hands-on training and basic, functional knowledge of the Microsoft Office suite (particularly Microsoft Word and Excel). Instruction covers how to cut and paste; how to use the Internet for searches and browsing, including job hunting; and how to use email to send attachments. Because interest in the program was very strong, the participants were selected on a "first come, first served" basis. Participants would take part in a four-week session held in the main library for one hour every Tuesday and Thursday morning, with an additional half-hour after class for feedback and some basic theory. To supplement the hands-on activities, Reference

Otis D. Alexander, director of the Danville Public Library, studied at ACRL/Harvard Graduate School of Education Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians.

The Danville Public Library.

Below, patrons at work in the library.



Information Specialist Lou Hendricks compiled a listing of search engines and websites geared especially for job opportunities for the unemployed. In the first institute, seventeen students enrolled. All of the participants who completed the program gave the sessions excellent evaluations and said that their increased skills would allow them to make every effort to take

advantage of new opportunities.

Other components of the Institute for Information Literacy include literary activities for preschoolers; storytelling; Movement for Senior Citizens; outreach programs such as reading and visual arts activities for the sick and shut-in; Library Salon, a sharing platform for musicians, dancers, artists, photographers, and story-

tellers; Meeting Virginia Authors and Neighboring Writers; and the World Events Discussion Group for teens. Overall, the institute is a set of programs that can help connect the community and improve the ability of members to compete in a global society. It's all about life-long learning.

Of course, if libraries are going to assist with the further development of the cultural, social, and economic infrastructure that will attract people and jobs to communities such as ours, then libraries are going to have to be equipped with the best personnel and given appropriate funding. After all, the library already provides for those who are interested in books, technology, AV media, intellectual and cultural programs, and other elements of the human experience. It will now be challenged to prepare its customers to participate in the knowledge economy of the future. **VI**

Sin Fronteras: How SOLINET Helps Libraries Break Down Barriers

by Sara Swain

Being welcoming and accessible—and above all, helpful—to the diverse communities we serve is a challenge librarians wholeheartedly accept. However, making this a reality calls for dedication, planning, and a creative use of resources. The Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET) offers a number of resources that support the mission of providing service to a wide variety of patron groups. In addition to offering classes that build on different professional skills, SOLINET keeps an eye open for the best practices and approaches in librarianship to meet the needs of a wide variety of populations.

For example, SOLINET offers a number of sessions to help deepen and update those collections and services focusing on African-American communities. One such session is “**Reference Resources for African-American Research**” (http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3301&WKSHPID=26RSAA), which assists patrons in finding and using primary and secondary historical resources on the Internet. “**Employee Diversity**” (http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3615&WKSHPID=26ED), coming to Virginia Commonwealth University in June, covers all aspects of employee diversity and how to appreciate and handle differences.

Teens as a group can be a challenge to serve and, as librarians,



ALL PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE SOLINET WEBSITE

SOLINET Preservation Class

we're not always sure what to do for them and how. “**Serving the Underserved: Helping Library Staff Work with Teens**” (http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3324&WKSHPID=26SUS) uses real-world examples to demonstrate how to design better young adult programming and build better young adult collections. “**Adolescence 101**” (http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3039&WKSHPID=26A101) teaches what experts are saying about teens, the issues and challenges they face, and the types of teen programs and services that resiliency researchers say really make a difference. “**Keeping Up with Pop Culture**” (<http://www.solinet.net/>

[workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3617&WKSHPID=26KPC](http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3617&WKSHPID=26KPC)) is a must because of the huge influence current fads have on young people and the way teens approach information, schoolwork, leisure time, and their lives.

Books are a powerful resource for helping people overcome the challenges and problems of life. “**Helping with Books: The Value of Bibliotherapy**” (http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3167&WKSHPID=26HWVB) teaches how to use “book therapy” to help children, teens, adults, and the elderly cope with developmental issues. For example, the angst of divorce and stepfamilies, bullying, the aging process, making choices, and other fearsome life events can all be alleviated using knowledge gained with bibliotherapy. The Internet is also a rich source, but other challenges can make Inter-

*Sara Swain is a veteran of the civil rights and women's liberation movements of the 1960s and 70s and was a writer/editor for *Womankind*, a pioneering national publication. She continues to be an activist on behalf of communities that experience oppression and discrimination. She has been at SOLINET for more than seven years, where she serves as writer/editor. “It is my greatest pleasure to be employed by and work in the service of librarians, a community of men and women in the forefront of the struggle to maintain our First Amendment rights and to demonstrate diversity and equality in practice.”*

net access difficult or impossible for some. **“Web Accessibility: Addressing Disabilities and Other Barriers”** (http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3367&WKSHPID=26WAIW) shows how librarians can evaluate their library’s existing website for accessibility; the course also teaches design techniques for creating webpages that can be readily accessed by most users.

Talking the Talk—en español

“Services to the Hispanic Community” (http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3323&WKSHPID=26STHC), **“Collection Development for Hispanic Populations”** (http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3085&WKSHPID=26CDHP), and **“Reference Resources: Hispanic Materials”** (http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3302&WKSHPID=26RSHM) are classes that assist in enriching collections and meeting the information needs of Hispanic/Latino populations. These sessions teach the importance of knowing Hispanic/Latino

cultures as a means of identifying patron needs and developing policies that correctly guide collection building, access, and maintenance. **“Spanish Language for Library Staff”** (<http://www.solinet.net/>

**... the angst of divorce
and stepfamilies,
bullying, the aging
process, making choices,
... can all be alleviated
using knowledge gained
with bibliotherapy.**

[workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3619&WKSHPID=26SLLS](http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3619&WKSHPID=26SLLS)) teaches culture and communication styles and provides basic library terminology to better serve Spanish-speaking patrons.

In addition, SOLINET teaches some of its classes and provides

some of its materials in Spanish. SOLINET’s Preservation Services has two such classes available. Libraries interested in these classes may contact Preservation Services Director Tina Mason at tmason@solinet.net or call (800) 999-8558 ext. 4894. **“El Cuidado de Sus Colecciones: Una introducción a temas de preservación”** (http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3003&WKSHPID=12CFCP) promotes preservation practices to ensure the longevity of collections and circulating materials. **“Preparación para Prevenir Desastres”** (http://www.solinet.net/workshops/ws_details.cfm?doc_id=3015&WKSHPID=12DPSP) is the Spanish-language version of SOLINET’s critically acclaimed “Disaster Prevention” class, which promotes general prevention practices but focuses primarily on measures, plans, and resources for libraries and archives located in disaster-prone areas such as the hurricane corridors in the Southeast and the Caribbean. Many of the translated course materials are available for free on the **Preservation Services publications page** (

HBCU library directors and deans at the 2002 Founding Conference of the HBCU Library Alliance.

[solinet.net/preservation/preservation_temp.cfm?doc_id=115](http://www.solinet.net/preservation/preservation_temp.cfm?doc_id=115)).

One such available publication is the 2002 online Spanish-language edition of **Michael Trinkle's hurricane survival guide** (http://www.solinet.net/preservation/huracan.cfm?doc_id=1007). *¡Huracán! Como Sobrevivir la Gran Tormenta* is a basic working document for museum curators, librarians, and archivists charged with the task of preserving collections in areas visited by hurricanes and other violent storms. Its focus is on surviving a hurricane through appropriate planning, with sections on hurricane-resistant building design, structural retrofits to improve survivability, necessary supplies, and actions to take prior to, during, and after a storm. Much of SOLINET's membership is in the hurricane corridor, and the 2005 hurricane season certainly demonstrated the value of such a working guide.

Collection Development

Hard copy or digital? In the library or at home? Whatever the format or delivery method, library collections have to meet the needs and interests of diverse communities. SOLINET's Program Management & Development (PM&D) staff is constantly assessing and reassessing new and established resources. PM&D seeks out vendors of databases and ebooks that focus on diverse cultural offerings—among them Alexander Street Press, the Brown University Women Writers Project, and a LexisNexis series called "Primary Sources." SOLINET's NetLibrary Shared Collections are another good source for enhancing ebook collections. OCLC's FirstSearch databases are also an excellent source of materials about and for populations that enjoy little notice or support in the mainstream. Some of these FirstSearch databases include

Alternative Press Index, ATLA Religion, Clase and Periódica, Contemporary Women's Issues, PAIS International, and Index to Legal Periodicals and Books. In addition to providing materials of interest to underserved populations, FirstSearch makes it possible for libraries to provide remote, full-text information to patrons who may not otherwise be able to access it.

OCLC also offers a number of other valuable e-resources:

- WorldCat Resource Sharing (ILL) allows libraries to obtain items from participating libraries

**... the 2005 hurricane
season certainly
demonstrated the value
of such a working guide.**

throughout the world, providing access to unlimited resources for a very diverse population. Even though they could never purchase materials to cover all possible peoples and cultures, libraries can still obtain them via ILL.

- OCLC Language Sets (<http://www.oclc.org/languagesets/default.htm>) help libraries buy collections in foreign languages even though no one on staff speaks those languages. The purchase includes catalog records as well, so that patrons can find the materials in the online catalog in their own languages.
- Open WorldCat (<http://www.oclc.org/worldcat/open/default.htm>) makes the library known and available to folks who use Google or Yahoo!, including those who would not have otherwise thought to visit the library.
- CONTENTdm (<http://www.oclc.org/contentdm/default.htm>) provides libraries with a tool to put media (historical documents,

photos, monographs, etc.) that might otherwise be hard to find online so that anyone can access them. There has been a lot of interest in this among Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) for putting black history collections online.

- WebJunction (<http://www.oclc.org/webjunction/default.htm>) gives librarians and library staff a way to keep in touch with issues in which they may not have expertise. WebJunction helps librarians serve a more diverse population by seeking advice and support on these topics (mostly technology-related) from peers worldwide.

All of the e-resources available from SOLINET are categorized for easy searching in the SOLINET database index (http://www.solinet.net/product_index/electronic_db_products-top.cfm). And SOLINET staff members are ready to assist with selection and support at the member services help desk (email helpdesk@solinet.net or call (800) 999-8558).

HBCU Library Alliance: The SOLINET Connection

In the interest of promoting, developing, and supporting the leadership role of librarians within the HBCU community and of preserving and making accessible the cultural heritage of the African-American community, SOLINET provides financial and administrative support to the HBCU Library Alliance (www.hbculibraries.org). The founding conference in 2002 was an event of historic proportions, bringing together 100 of the country's 103 HBCU library directors. Six Virginia HBCU libraries are among the membership. The HBCU Library Alliance is conceived and led by SOLINET board members Loretta Parham, formerly of Hampton University and now director and CEO of the Robert W. Woodruff Library at the Atlanta

University Center, and Janice Franklin, director of the Levi Watkins Learning Center of Alabama State University.

In January 2005, SOLINET and the HBCU Library Alliance received a \$500,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to provide professional development opportunities for librarians in HBCUs. The focus of the two-year project is to create a culture of leadership within the library staff, strengthen that leadership within the HBCU library community, and integrate library services into campus programs for teaching and learning. Lillian Lewis, based at SOLINET, is the HBCU library alliance program officer. Lewis is responsible for the operation of the alliance and for coordinating and conducting the HBCU Library Alliance Leadership Program. Elsie Stephens Weatherington, dean of library and media services, and Tessa Perry, associate librarian of technical services, both for Virginia State University, took part in the Pilot Institute in June 2005. Hampton University's Library Director Gladys Bell and Peabody Librarian Sherin Henderson participated in Institute I of the leadership program.

In September 2005, SOLINET and the HBCU Library Alliance published an assessment of the state of HBCU libraries. Produced with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, *The State of Libraries at Historically Black Colleges and Universities* describes levels of support for and services from HBCU libraries and compares it to that for other peer academic libraries in the U.S. It offers a baseline for future comparison among HBCUs and between HBCUs and non-HBCUs, as well as data that can be used to strengthen libraries at HBCUs individually and as a group. The report is available on SOLINET's website (www.solinet.net/resources/HBCUStats) and on the HBCU Library Alliance website (<http://www.hbculibraries.org/>).



Raymond Santiago and a guest at the National Diversity in Libraries Conference.

net/resources/HBCUStats) and on the HBCU Library Alliance website (<http://www.hbculibraries.org/>).

In February 2006, SOLINET, in partnership with the HBCU Library Alliance and the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL), received a \$20,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support a pilot test of an exchange program for librarians from HBCUs. The pilot will place librarians from HBCUs at five ASERL libraries for two weeks during the summer of 2006. The match between each librarian and the institution is based upon the librarian's strategic focus and the expertise of the ASERL institution in that area. SOLINET continues to play a supporting role, but the HBCU Library Alliance has a proud and significant life of its own.

National Diversity in Libraries 2004 Conference in Atlanta

On another order of magnitude was SOLINET's role in cosponsoring, along with ASERL and the HBCU Library Alliance, the May

2004 National Diversity in Libraries Conference in Atlanta. Record-breaking attendance and a broad spectrum of session topics resulted in an energetic, inspiring, and fruitful event. Sixteen librarians from nine different libraries in Virginia were among the nationwide participants.

Raymond Santiago, director of the Miami-Dade Public Library System in Florida (<http://www.mdpls.org/>), commented in his keynote speech on the three main conference tracks. He defined staff diversity as the first recognition of diverse user populations and collection development as a balancing act between Dewey and ethnicity. With respect to access, Santiago argued against the trend toward regional concentrations and called for reintroducing the small neighborhood library. Closing speaker Francine Henderson, administrator of the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture & History in Atlanta (<http://www.af.public.lib.ga.us/aarl/>), hailed the connections librarians have today that were lacking in the

1970s. "What brings a person to uphold and promote diversity," she said, "is not statistics. It is our discovery of other cultures—that there are other people out there, with all their vitality and dynamism. And how do we learn about these other cultures? By hanging out, by being in their midst." Barbara Dewey, president of the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries and a longtime member of ARL's Diversity Committee, was very pleased with



Above, the African-American staff at SOLINET.



Left, SOLINET's gay and lesbian staff and friends.

the results: "This was the first time in this series of conferences that we included librarians from all types and sizes of libraries—not just ARL members—which contributed greatly to the sense that we can achieve very real results through collaboration with partners on many levels. I think diversity is important for all libraries, and I'm very happy to see such widespread interest and support among my colleagues."

On the Home Front

SOLINET promotes and celebrates diversity on the home front as well—in hiring and promotion,

of course, but also socially. To celebrate Black History Month each February, SOLINET's African-American staff put together a festive and informative month-long exhibition of the history and achievements of Americans of African ancestry, culminating in a beautifully presented (and eagerly anticipated) feast of traditional Southern/African-American fare, fondly known as the Soul-to-SOL luncheon.

Later in the year, SOLINET staff dedicate Gay & Lesbian Pride Month to promoting the humanity and dignity of the women and men throughout history whose sexuality has placed them outside

the mainstream and who deserve to be accepted as "us" rather than "them." The observation includes weekly films devoted to gay issues and intranet snapshots of known and unknown gays and lesbians and their contributions in all spheres.

It is SOLINET's ongoing mission and vision to participate with the library community in upholding and popularizing cultural diversity. Libraries are the repositories of the cultural and social histories and traditions of the peoples of the world. Just as we seek to preserve these cultures, so we support and promote them. That is our goal. **VI**

Multicultural Programming Celebrates Fifteen Years at the University of Virginia Library

by Matt Ball and Leland Deeds

Creating an environment in which people and ideas are respected is one of the central visions of the University of Virginia Library. One expression of that vision has been the Multicultural Issues Committee (MIC), which last year celebrated its fifteenth anniversary. Created in 1990 to promote a single event, the MIC now promotes or cosponsors a dozen or so events per year with a volunteer membership numbering around twenty.

The MIC has had many permutations throughout its history, beginning as a small group of library staff brought together to generate programming or exhibits for African-American History Month. Since that time, the group has become a committee with a broader charge and a larger membership while retaining its focus on multicultural issues. Committed to promoting diversity early on, the library was one of the first units within the university to sponsor a group focused on advancing excellence through diversity and creating welcoming places to work and study.

As a continuously evolving group, the MIC has altered its organization on several occasions. Most recently, the committee has subdivided into four working groups: hiring and retention, training and orientation, publicity, and events and cultural programming.

Though much of the committee's efforts have historically gone toward event programming, the MIC is very fortunate to have successfully become an important part of several internal library processes, including hiring and reten-

... In an effort to ensure diversity in hiring, a member of the MIC serves on each search committee for faculty positions

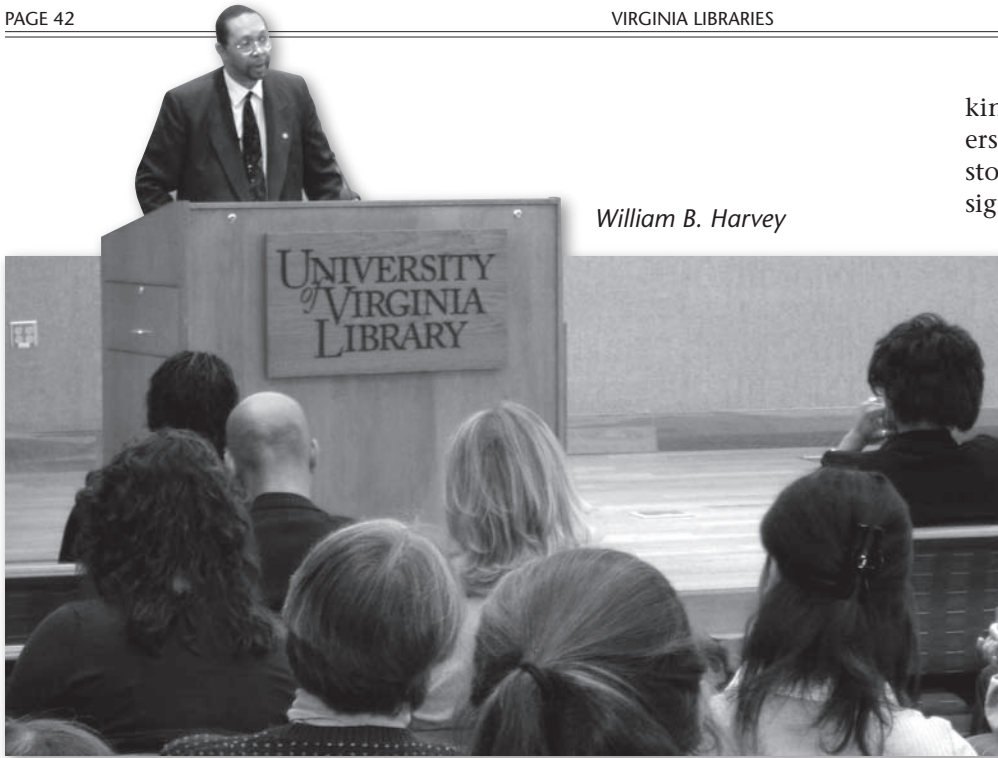
tion. In an effort to ensure diversity in hiring, a member of the MIC serves on each search committee for faculty positions, and for most interviews candidates have an opportunity to meet with the entire committee. These primarily informational sessions provide an excellent opportunity to inform potential new library employees about the library's commitment to cultural diversity and to ascertain what kinds of diversity initiatives the candidate's previous employers have undertaken. This visible role in hiring highlights the library's commitment to seriously addressing diversity in staffing as the library strives to make its faculty and staff mirror the broad cultural

mixture that our student population represents. As a vital piece of this process, the MIC hopes to broaden its continued activity on issues of retention.

Related to the hiring and retention subgroup, the MIC members who make up the training and orientation group assist the library's staff education and development program officer, who is also an ex-officio member of the MIC. This group strives to furnish training on subjects such as managing across generational lines or performing 360 degree performance reviews as well as training on such issues as cultural competencies in the workplace. On a lighter note, members from this group coordinate the New Employee Lunch Program. Members from the MIC welcome all new employees of the library, both staff and faculty, by taking them to lunch with other staff members, ideally outside the new

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William B. Harvey

kinds, including visiting lecturers, film festivals, student forums, storytelling, live music, and book signings. Many have observed just how much this small group has accomplished in the past with a small budget but a great deal of commitment and energy. The committee has been fortunate enough to experience a substantial increase in funding over the past couple of years, however, which has allowed it to offer even more programming and cosponsorships. Members of this subgroup, with help from the rest of the committee, are responsible for event planning from beginning to

employee's normal working departments. This activity is not used as a recruiting tool for new MIC members—it is a friendly gesture to make sure that new employees feel welcome from the beginning and to add a few more friendly faces to their early work experiences.

The publicity subgroup is responsible for the creation and dissemination of printed material, such as bookmarks, flyers, and posters, that are intended to promote the MIC itself or a particular event that the committee is sponsoring. Last summer the MIC was fortunate enough to receive some designs from an outgoing member who is a painter; these are now being incorporated into new promotional material. Using one of those designs, a new bookmark that promotes the MIC has recently replaced the committee's old brochure. Two more bookmarks are in the works.

While the first two subgroups mainly focus on library staff, the



Storyteller Gregorio Pedroza

other two are aimed more broadly at all members of the university community, including students, faculty, and the general public. This is especially true for the events and cultural programming subgroup, which draws on the lion's share of the MIC's resources and is what the committee is best known for. The MIC sponsors events of all

end, including researching desired events, booking and scheduling, making travel and accommodation arrangements, catering, coordinating with cosponsors, working with the publicity subgroup, etc. Over the last couple of years, the MIC has sponsored or cosponsored over fifteen events. Some recent highlights include:

- In his first public appearance since arriving at U.Va., William B. Harvey, the newly-hired vice president and chief officer for diversity and equity, gave a presentation entitled “Issues of Race at Predominantly White Institutions.” The event filled the auditorium of the Harrison Institute/Small Special Collections Library with a standing-room-only crowd that included students, staff, faculty, the general public, and news carriers from across Virginia. Harvey spoke very eloquently about racial hiring discrepancies at colleges and universities, drawing on years of research and quoting extensively from his many articles covering this topic. The lively Q & A after his formal presentation gave members of the audience an opportunity to examine a little more deeply some of the particular issues that affect U.Va., as well as the broader implications of racial diversity in higher education.
- With the vice provost for faculty advancement, the MIC cosponsored a presentation by Roberto Ibarra, special assistant on diversity initiatives at the University of New Mexico and author of *Beyond Affirmative Action: Reframing the Context of Higher Education*. In his presentation, “Diversity for the 21st Century University: Multicontextuality Theory and Practice,” Ibarra discussed his theory of changing the paradigm in higher education from one of reforming academic cultures to reframing them by interweaving diversity initiatives into the context of the academic cultures.
- The MIC was very pleased to be a cosponsor with the University of Virginia Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Resource Center for the “Call to Duty Tour.” The “Call to Duty Tour,” a panel discussion crossing the nation, offers a platform for renewed debate on the merits of

the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy. It featured several members of the armed services who embody the reality of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” in today’s armed forces.

- A delightful program from noted bilingual storyteller Gregorio Pedroza enchanted an audience of students, faculty, and staff with several stories touching on aspects of Hispanic and Latino cultures, many drawn from Pedroza’s childhood. Pedroza delivered three sessions in both English and Spanish—two on folklore and one on creative writ-

It featured several members of the armed services who embody the reality of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” in today’s armed forces.

ing. These events were cosponsored by several other U.Va. organizations, including the Office of the Dean of Students/Student Life and the Alianza Community Leadership Council.

- Claudia J. Ford is an international development expert who has lived and worked all over the world. She is a senior lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand and the founder and director of the Princess Trust, a charity that deals with issues of infant rape and child sexual abuse. Ford lives in Johannesburg, South Africa, and was a visiting scholar last year at U.Va. The MIC sponsored a reading and book signing for Ford’s *Why Do I Scream at God for the Rape of Babies?* Appearing in Newcomb Hall, Ford captivated students, faculty, and staff with stories from her book and a discussion of the Princess Trust.

- In a program entitled “The Muslim Student Experience at U.Va.,” the MIC sponsored a panel discussion with several U.Va. graduate students who shared their experiences as Muslim students at U.Va. The panel was moderated by the library’s own Sajjad Yusuf and drew a sizable crowd of students, faculty, and staff to the Robertson Media Center in Clemons Library.
- During African-American History Month, the MIC sponsored presentations by Tony Burroughs, the international genealogist, author, and teacher recently featured on the PBS special “African-American Lives” with Louis Gates, Jr. Burroughs presented two programs in the Harrison Institute/Small Special Collections Library touching on African-American genealogy. The first one, called “It Ain’t All on the Web,” was a review of the multitude of physical historical records and genealogical resources that are in archives and courthouses across the country, many of which may never be on the Internet. The other program, entitled “Freedmen’s Bureau Research,” was an exploration of the Freedmen Bureau records, a very valuable and important resource for African-American history and genealogy. These events were cosponsored by the Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies/Center for the Study of Local Knowledge and the Office of Student Life/APA Programs and Services.
- During the Virginia Film Festival of 2005, the MIC was proud to be a cosponsor for visiting director, producer, and writer William Greaves. The event included screenings of three of Greaves’s most influential films: *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One*; *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take 2 ½*; and *Ralph Bunche: An American Odyssey*, a documentary covering the life

of the United Nations diplomat and 1950 Nobel Prize winner best known for his efforts to aid colonized nations in reinstating independence and for facilitating four armistice agreements between Israel and Arab neighbors.

- The MIC was pleased to bring Steven G. Fullwood to U.Va. for two programs addressing the preservation of the history of black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, same gender loving, queer, questioning, and in the life cultures (LGBT/SGL/Q/Q/inthelife). Fullwood, an accredited librarian and writer who currently works at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the New York Public Library, founded the Black Gay and Lesbian Archive Project in 2000 to aid in the preservation of these increasingly rare materials. Fullwood presented two programs, one aimed at librarians and archivists held in Clemons Library, and another one for students, faculty, and staff held in the Kaleidoscope Diversity Center in Newcomb Hall, U.Va.'s student center.
- Nicholas Patler, author of *Jim Crow and the Wilson Administration*, delved deeply into the historic protest movement which questioned racial segregation and discrimination at the federal level and tested Woodrow Wilson during the first two years of his administration. The MIC was proud to bring Patler to U.Va. for a reading from his book and a dis-

cussion with Q & A. The event, held in the Harrison Institute/ Small Special Collections Library, was also broadcast on C-SPAN Book TV.

In addition to these events, the MIC has also sponsored or cospon-

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sored programs featuring Gelsy Verna, an associate professor of painting at the University of Wisconsin at Madison; Rolena Adorno, the Reuben Post Halleck Professor of Spanish and director of graduate studies at Yale University, whose areas of interest include colonial Spanish-American literature and history; Carlos Eire, winner of the 2003 National Book Award for Nonfiction for *Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy*; and Dorothy Height, who discussed her memoir, *Open Wide the Freedom Gates*, and her experiences as one of the leading figures in the civil rights movement.

Still to come this academic year, the MIC will present Tanglefoot, a

high-energy Canadian folk band that interprets Canadian culture through song, and cosponsor the U.Va. Asian Film Festival. Also planned for finals week, when stress levels reach astronomical heights, the MIC will offer a traditional Japanese tea ceremony to sooth and calm the nerves. And, encouraged by its recent successes, the MIC is setting its sights on even higher-profile guests in coming years, including comedienne Margaret Cho and actress and oral historian Anna Deavere Smith. Although budget constraints may limit bringing in such luminaries, the MIC is willing to try.

Throughout its organizational life, the MIC has grown and changed, and it's certain to continue evolving as new challenges and opportunities present themselves. Through internal initiatives such as hiring, training, and orientation, the MIC strives to make the library a better place to work for all of its employees. And through a variety of programs and venues, the MIC endeavors to promote the notion that we are all, through our various cultural backgrounds and experiences, contributors to the multiplicity that makes up a university. As the University of Virginia advances toward its goal of becoming the model for a world-class research and education institution, the MIC will strive to play its part in making the library, and the university, a welcoming environment for all. **VI**

Welcoming Our GLBT Patrons

by *C. A. Gardner*

Since 1948, and through its revisions and amendments in 1961 and 1980, the Library Bill of Rights adopted by the Council of the American Library Association has served to protect and support the rights of patrons regardless of “origin, age, background, or views.” Indeed, the Library Bill of Rights specifically states, in its opening sentence, “Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves,” and goes on to reaffirm that “Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.”¹ Yet despite this promise, we know that this policy is not universally enacted; even those librarians who strive for balanced collections may have second thoughts about material that they fear will be challenged, while others may deliberately avoid controversial subject areas, often with the excuse that there really isn’t a call for those materials in that particular community, whose majority would object to the inclusion of such resources. Other libraries that do not have a known member of a particular minority group on staff may simply overlook the needs of some less vocal communities. While this exclusion may not be deliberate, it is just as harmful to the patrons who silently look to the library for help.

One such group is the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning (GLBT²) community. Despite increasing visibility and acceptance, the GLBT community

still encounters violence and discrimination on a daily basis, and has to cope with everything from casual slurs to physical attacks on persons and property and the threat of losing jobs or being alienated from family and friends.³ It’s no wonder that many are not willing to publicly discuss their sexual identity. It’s also no surprise that these individuals should view the

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library as a safe haven where they can explore their concerns without fear of condemnation.⁴ Yet all too often, GLBT patrons find that they are invisible within the library as well. Key works and award-winning titles, not to mention up-to-date resources on vital health topics, are absent from the shelves. The fact that, by their very nature, GLBT materials are often deemed controversial highlights the problem faced by these patrons. While the library is busy expanding services to other minority groups, there may not even be a strong core collection for GLBT patrons. According to a number of studies⁵, many libraries in America—particularly public and school librar-

ies, where the materials are often the most needed—are lacking in key GLBT areas. Not only do many collections fail with limited and outdated information, the collection may suffer from ineffective or misleading cataloging and the failure to provide visible solutions to information needs with booklists, displays, or any of the other forms of recognition usually accorded to minority groups and specific interest areas.

Forget the excuses. Virtually every library in America has GLBT patrons. Despite stereotypes, these patrons cannot always be recognized on sight, and they come from the widest variety of ethnic, cultural, religious, and economic backgrounds imaginable. An adequate means to measure the size of this population does not exist (due to fear, underreporting, the problem of definitions, and many other factors).⁶ Though we do have the beginnings of an idea thanks to the 2000 census, even this instrument shows its inherent bias, capturing figures for every minority in the United States except non-heterosexuals. The closest the census comes to reporting data for GLBT people is through the provision of “same-sex unmarried partner” data.⁷ This data only measures those who are currently in an overtly homosexual relationship and living with the partner in question—and willing to report that relationship to a government instrument. Single people, bisexuals, the transgendered or questioning, gay people in heterosexual marriages, and those who prefer to maintain separate dwellings all

continue to go uncounted; and census-takers were instructed to rule as invalid any same-sex *married* partner data due to federal legislation regarding marriage.⁸ The census data thus only provides a hint of a much larger community—probably at least two-thirds larger than reported data. Yet even these partial statistics are revealing. The “Profile of General Demographic Characteristics” for Virginia shows that in 2000, Virginia had 126,365 unmarried-partner households,⁹ out of which 7,535 were comprised of a “male householder and male partner” and 7,735 of a “female householder and female partner.”¹⁰ This gives a figure of 15,270 gay and lesbian couples in Virginia in 2000—in other words, 30,540 gays and lesbians in live-in, stable relationships who were willing to report their status to the census.

Studies have shown the importance of libraries to the GLBT population, particularly during the initial quest for identity. The library is seen as an impartial refuge, containing information one might be castigated for seeking elsewhere.¹¹ In the late 1980s, Janet Creelman and Roman Harris conducted the first empirical studies of the information needs of the GLBT population, particularly lesbians in the coming-out stage. These studies showed that, with the exception of consulting other lesbians, print sources (seventy-eight percent) were the chief source of information about issues such as coming to terms with one’s identity, dealing with coming out to others, learning “the rules,” and finding community. Likewise, the library itself was the first choice in the quest for knowledge of eighty-four percent of lesbian information seekers. Nevertheless, a full fifty-three percent of respondents indicated that the sources found in the library were inadequate for their needs due to lack of current materials, lack of relevancy (a preponderance

of emphasis on gay men), lack of practical information, and a collection that focused on depressing or negative viewpoints. While online resources have taken on a strong role since then, print continues to play a vital role, with its ability to provide greater depth and detail. GLBT magazines and newspapers can be especially helpful in dealing with current issues and information needs; however, few North American libraries carry this material, and when they do, they frequently carry only the most well-known title, *The Advocate*.¹² And while some library collections have

**... despite petitions, the
books were not returned
to the middle school.**

improved, further studies have replicated those early findings, demonstrating both the importance of the library and its failings, and resulting in two key suggestions for improvement: a more approachable and sensitive library staff and better quality collections.¹³

School libraries often face the most rigorous challenges in providing GLBT material, as librarian Christine Enterline discovered when attempting to update her middle school’s biography collection, stocking it with new works on all minorities, including a series on famous GLBT people who might provide inspiration and encouragement to students. School administrators removed the books before they even hit the shelves, ostensibly to review them for age-appropriateness; despite petitions, the books were not returned to the middle school. Though the books were eventually relocated to a district high school and the middle school library’s collection develop-

ment policy was strengthened to guard against censorship due to sexual orientation, Enterline felt that the negative message had already been sent.¹⁴ Facing the possibility of such confrontations with both parents and administrators, many school librarians choose to avoid purchasing controversial materials; but this silence puts GLBT youth in danger. Not only are these young people subject to one of the most homophobic and hostile environments—the school atmosphere, in which “gay” is used as an insult, homophobic slurs will be heard by each student an average of five times an hour, and beatings of gay students occur with disturbing frequency—their isolated position also places them at greater risk for violence, abuse, and suicide.¹⁵ As Debra Lau Whelan reports in *School Library Journal*,

Gay teens may stress the importance of identifying with characters in books, but when someone like Laurie Taylor, the Fayetteville, AR, parent who recently challenged 58 sexually explicit books in her local school library, gets national attention, the spines of many librarians and administrators suddenly go limp. What’s the risk? Michael Glatze, the editor-in-chief of *YgA*, a bimonthly magazine with a circulation of 10,000 that targets young gay America, says it best: “Librarians shouldn’t be in the business of denying information.” Without vital books and resources, gay kids can end up in high-risk situations involving online predators or turn to drugs to help them cope. “Confidence comes from information and knowing that you’re not alone,” Glatze says.¹⁶

Imaginative works that portray realistic GLBT characters are extremely important in building self-

esteem and providing a sense of normalcy. In addition, such depictions can help to increase understanding and reduce homophobia by broadening the minds of others. However, the best—and most popular—GLBT imaginative works, including poetry, fiction, and drama, are frequently nowhere to be found in the library's holdings.¹⁷ Some researchers have actually performed and published title-by-title checks of North American library catalogs for works that are either cited in prominent review sources or recipients of GLBT awards. While some titles are held, the distribution and coverage is spotty and unpredictable.¹⁸ In addition, though other minorities and subjects may have booklists or even monthly displays to help guide patrons to resources or enlighten them to the presence of helpful materials, seldom if ever are such provisions made for GLBT materials.¹⁹

Some librarians avoid the issue of collecting for the GLBT population by pointing out that their library already upholds the ALA Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read statements, which prohibit discrimination.²⁰ Yet discrimination is occurring in the lack of selections being made. Indeed, self-censorship seems to be even more of a problem in libraries than challenges. Here's a case in point. A quick search of the catalog of one public library system in a metropolitan area of Virginia revealed at least 183 distinct DVD and VHS editions of movies that had won Academy Awards. Of these, twenty-six distinct titles, many of which were duplicated in DVD and VHS editions, held an R rating for sexual situations and/or violence. Yet when one member of the collection development committee tried to request that the library purchase *Brokeback Mountain*, the request was rejected for unspecified reasons. Was it due to the fear of offending conservative patrons? The

film was actually very popular with the mainstream audience, grossing \$83,043,761 in the United States and achieving a worldwide gross of \$175,843,761; it was number one at the box office from January 17 to 19, 2006, never left the top ten through February 16, and was still hitting in the top ten through March 7.²¹ More to the point, *Brokeback Mountain* won three Academy Awards and was nominated for five others. In addition, not counting nominations, *Brokeback Mountain* won three BAFTA Film awards, the David Lean Award for Direction,

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the Boston Society of Film Critics Award, three Broadcast Film Critics Association awards, three Central Ohio Film Critics awards, two Chicago Film Critics Association awards, four Dallas-Fort Worth Film Critics Association awards, a Directors Guild of America Award, four Florida Film Critics Circle awards, a GLAAD Media Award, four Golden Globes, two Independent Spirit awards, two London Critics Circle Film awards, two Los Angeles Film Critics Association awards, two National Board of Review awards, three New York Film Critics Circle awards, two Online Film Critics Society awards, a PGA Golden Laurel Award, five Phoenix Film Critics Society awards, three San Francisco Film Critics Circle awards, four Satellite awards, three Southeastern Film Critics Association awards, two Vancouver Film Critics Circle awards, a Golden Lion (Venice Film Festival), and a Writ-

ers Guild of America Award²²—and I'm probably leaving out a few.

Surely these credentials would be enough to withstand any patron challenge, even for a public library with a conservative patron base—particularly if that library had a collection development policy that upheld the acquisition of award-winning movies. As it stands, the deliberate lack of inclusion of such a noteworthy film sends a somewhat sinister message.

A similar problem occurs with misleading or inadequate cataloging. Some well-meaning librarians may purchase GLBT materials, but through fear of challenges, classify them in what might be deemed a less controversial location (such as cataloging works of fiction under a nonfiction number), or otherwise make them less visible through lessened subject access so that only the most dedicated searchers will discover them. Segregating these materials by relegating them to a less prominent area of the library serves neither the GLBT community, who deserve to be able to find their materials by browsing like other patrons, nor the populace at large, whose lives might be enriched by encountering these works. One of the key tenets of classification, it should be remembered, is that works on a like subject shall be placed together on the shelf—even works that offer opposing or controversial viewpoints.

One recent case of deliberate miscataloging that has made the news involves the picture book *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson, Peter Parnell, and Henry Cole. Like many works of fiction, this book is based on a true story—in this case, the story of two male penguins who acted as a mated couple in raising a chick. Like many other children's books based on autobiographical or historical incidents, it is intended for an audience of fiction-readers.

In Missouri, librarians moved the book from children's fiction to nonfiction in response to the protest of two parents.²³ This not only makes the book more difficult to find for those who have read positive reviews and expect to find it with other picture books, but also sends an offensive message—that fictional works portraying gay characters are by their very nature too harmful to place in a section of the library where any child might read them. Unfortunately, other librarians who have read about this case have seen this as a viable solution, and some library systems in Virginia have voluntarily chosen to class the book in nonfiction, without waiting for protests to arise.

With a number of prominent GLBT bookstores going out of business due to changes in the bookselling market,²⁴ and the concentration in chain bookstores on higher-selling titles from large commercial presses,²⁵ there's even more need for libraries to make an effort to close the information gap. Librarians should be aware that many quality GLBT publications arise or are kept in print primarily through the small press. As a result, these books might not be carried by large distribution groups such as Baker & Taylor. For the same reason, the broad range of GLBT titles are often underrepresented in review sources, in part due to the lower profile of the small press.²⁶ In addition, specific titles might be overlooked because of the increasing trend in modern publishing to market GLBT works as literary fiction instead of openly appealing to GLBT audiences.²⁷ For a truly accurate picture of the GLBT titles available, more targeted sources such as the *Lambda Book Review* ought to be consulted,²⁸ in addition to special reports in mainstream publications, such as the annual review of GLBT titles in *Publishers Weekly* or ALA's quarterly *GLBTRT Task Force Newsletter*, complete with reviews

and advice. *Booklist* and *Library Journal* provide information about current GLBT titles, while Baker & Taylor offers the catalog *Pride: Your Source for Gay and Lesbian DVDs and Videos*. There are also a number of book-length collection development tools, such as *Lesbian and Gay Voices: An Annotated Bibliography and Guide to Literature for Children and Young Adults* by Frances Ann Day and *Gay and Lesbian Library Service* by Cal Gough and Ellen Greenblatt. Many others can be discovered through the resources at the end of this article.

Silence is one of the most pernicious forms of prejudice.

In seeking to improve library service to GLBT patrons, the most important factor may be simple awareness. Many librarians may either unconsciously forget about this constituency, or consciously seek to avoid controversy. Staff diversity training on GLBT issues would certainly help, fostering more sensitive interactions with the public, drawing awareness to collection development needs, and providing a more eloquent ability to defend these materials.

One of the most effective means of successfully standing against a challenge is to have a collection development policy that addresses such issues clearly in place. Bibliographic notes in the catalog, such as the 586 Awards Note, will provide a quick reference point for both patrons and librarians about why the materials were chosen. Keeping a file with recommended and award-winning titles can also serve a dual purpose, providing collection development possibilities and offering evidence in sup-

port of particular titles when faced with a challenge.

Another important act is codifying a positive commitment to improving collections for the GLBT community, rather than simply stating that no discrimination will be allowed. As would be done for any other library constituency, a core group of GLBT titles in current editions should be made available. Consulting award lists and comparing them to current holdings is a good start. Further collection development can be tailored to individual audiences; public libraries can learn about the specific needs and interests of their geographic areas by consulting local GLBT organizations, newspapers, and bookstores, while university and special libraries should remember to be aware of GLBT topics not only in the queer studies arena, but also where these issues intersect with other disciplines and fields.

Silence is one of the most pernicious forms of prejudice. Don't fail your GLBT patrons out of fear. Remember, the Library Bill of Rights doesn't require us to agree with the viewpoints or lifestyles of our patrons. It requires us to respect them, to provide the resources they need, and to uphold their right to service even in the face of challenges.

Resources for GLBT Collection Development

Collection Development Policies

- *Collection Development Policies Related to GLBT Issues*, http://www.cervone.com/html/glbtcollection_development.html

GLBT Literary Awards & Organizations

- ALA's Stonewall Book Awards, <http://www.ala.org/ala/glbtrt/stonewall/stonewallbook.htm>
- Gaylactic Spectrum Awards Foundation, <http://www.spectrumawards.org/>
- Lambda Literary Foundation

(includes Lambda Literary Awards and the *Lambda Book Report*), <http://www.lambdaliterary.org/>

- *Prism Comics: Your LGBT Guide to Comics*, available in print from <http://www.prismcomics.org/index.php>. (This comic-style annual provides an ongoing review of GLBT characters appearing in mainstream comics each year, as well as reviews of GLBT-authored titles.)
- The Publishing Triangle: The Association of Lesbians and Gay Men in Publishing, <http://www.publishingtriangle.org/>
- Saints and Sinners: An Alternative Literary Festival for the GLBT Community, Their Friends, and All Readers and Writers, <http://www.sasfest.org/>

Additional Collection Development Resources

- American Library Association Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table, <http://www.ala.org/ala/glbtrt/welcome/glbtround.htm>
- "Beyond Angst: What's New in Literature and Resources for GLBT Youth and Their Allies" by Evi Klett and Becker Parkhurst-Strout, <http://webjunction.org/do/Navigation?category=12989>
- *The Gay & Lesbian Atlas*, by Gary J. Gates and Jason Ost, 2004, ISBN 0-87766-721-7, Urban Institute Press, <http://www.urban.org/pubs/gayatlas/> (With data from the 2000 U.S. Census, this resource provides not only the most accurate known statistics about local GLBT populations in the U.S., but also offers data on their age ranges and other social factors, allowing for a collection tailored to meet local needs.)
- *GLBTQ: An Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, & Queer Culture*, "Literature," http://www.glbqtq.com/subject/literature_a-b.html
- *Guide to Gay and Lesbian Resources: A Classified Bibliography Based upon*

the Collections of the University of Chicago Library by Frank Conway, Sebastian Hierl, and Sem Sutter, <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/su/gaylesb/glguide.html>

- "Lesbian Resources on the Web" by Ellen Greenblatt, <http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/WomensStudies/fc/fcwebgrn.htm>
- "LGBT/Queer Studies Library Research Guide: Diversity & Ethnic Studies" by Susan A. Vega García, <http://www.public.iastate.edu/~savega/lesbigay.htm>
- *Librarians' Internet Index: Websites You Can Trust*, "Gay and Lesbian Studies," <http://www.lii.org/pub/subtopic/2017>
- "Out of the Closet?" by Jim Van Buskirk, <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA512184.html>
- *Queertheory.com*, "Libraries and Archives," http://www.queertheory.com/academics/queer_libraries_archives.htm
- "Recommended LGBT/Queer Studies Websites: Diversity & Ethnic Studies" by Susan A. Vega García, http://www.public.iastate.edu/~savega/les_biga.htm

Notes

¹ American Library Association, "Library Bill of Rights," in *Intellectual Freedom: Statements and Policies* [website] 23 January 1996 [cited 24 May 2006]; available from <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/state mentspols/statementsif/library billrights.htm>.

² This acronym takes many forms and includes many groups. Some of the more common variants include GLBT, LGBT, and either with a "Q" at the end. I have chosen "GLBT" purely for convenience, as it seems to be the older established acronym.

³ Jim Van Buskirk, "Out of the Closet?," in *Library Journal.com* [journal online] 1 April 2005 [cited 12 May 2006]; available from <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA512184.html>.

⁴ Catherine J. Ritchie, "Collection Development of Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual-Related Adult Non-Fiction in Medium-Sized Illinois Public Libraries." *Illinois Libraries* 83.2 (2001): 39-70.

⁵ Steven L. Joyce, "Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Library Service: A Review of the Literature." *Public Libraries* 39.5 (2002): 270-9.

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Alex Spence, "Gay Young Adult Fiction in the Public Library: A Comparative Survey." *Public Libraries* 38.4 (1999): 224-9.

⁶ "How Many Gay People Are There?," in *Avert.org* [website] 26 July 2005 [cited 12 May 2006]; available from <http://www.avert.org/hsexu1.htm>.

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⁷ Margie Mason, "Census Figures on Same-Sex Couples," in *SpeakOut.com* [website] 8 August 2001 [cited 12 May 2006]; available from <http://speakout.com/activism/apstories/10044-1.html>.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, "Technical Note on Same-Sex Unmarried Partner Data from the 1990 and 2000 Censuses," in *United States Census 2000* [website] 31 July 2002 [cited 12 May 2006]; available from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/samesex.html>.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, "DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000. Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data. Geographic Area: Virginia," in *United States Census 2000* [website] 2000 [cited 12 May 2006]; available from http://www.factfinder.census.gov/servlet/QTTable?_bm=y&geo_id=04000US51&-qr_name=DEC_2000_SF1_U_DP1&-ds_name=DEC_2000_SF1_U&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-_sse=on.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, "PCT21.

Unmarried-Partner Households by Sex of Partners [7]—Universe: Households. Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4)—Sample Data,” in *United States Census 2000* [website] 2000 [cited 12 May 2006]; available from http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTable?_bm=y&-state=dt&-context=dt&-ds_name=DEC_2000_SF4_U&-mt_name=DEC_2000_SF4_U_PCT021&-tree_id=404&-redoLog=true&-all_geo_types=N&-caller=geoselect&-geo_id=04000US51&-search_results=01000US&-format=&-lang=en.

Oddly enough, the total number of unmarried partners listed in this table is different than that of the “Profile of General Demographic Characteristics.” In “Unmarried-Partner Households by Sex of Partners,” the total figure for Virginia is listed as 120,466.

¹¹ Ritchie.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Joyce.

¹⁴ Andrea Glick, “Disappearing Books.” *School Library Journal* 47.2 (2001): 18–19.

Rick Margolis, “Settlement Reached on Gay Books,” in *SLJ.com* [journal online] 1 May 2001 [cited 12 May 2006]; available from <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA73648.html>.

¹⁵ C. J. Bott, “Fighting the Silence: How to Support Your Gay and Straight Students.” *Voice of Youth Advocates* 23.1 (2000): 22, 24, 26.

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¹⁶ Debra Lau Whelan, “Out and Ignored: Why Are So Many School Libraries Reluctant to Embrace Gay Teens?,” in *SLJ.com* [journal on-

line] 1 January 2006 [cited 12 May 2006]; available from <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6296527.html>.

¹⁷ Joyce.

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¹⁸ Spence.

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²⁰ Ibid.

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²² “Awards for *Brokeback Mountain* (2005),” in *IMDb: Earth’s Biggest Movie Database* [website] 2006 [cited 12 May 2006]; available from <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0388795/awards>.

²³ “‘Gay’ Penguins Book Frozen Out in Missouri Libraries,” in *Chicago Sun-Times* [newspaper online] 5 March 2006 [cited 12 May 2006]; available from <http://www.sun-times.com/output/news/cst-nws-flap05.html>.

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²⁵ Michael Bronski, “After the ‘Boom.’” *Publishers Weekly* 246.18 (1999): 38–42.

²⁶ Joyce.

²⁷ Bronski.

²⁸ Ritchie.

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Virginia Reviews

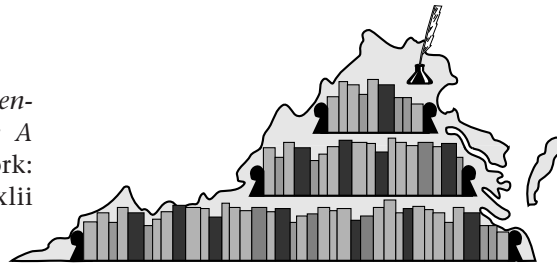
Reviews prepared by staff members of the Library of Virginia
Sara B. Bearss, Editor



Edward G. Lengel. *General George Washington: A Military Life*. New York: Random House, 2005. xlii + 450 pp. ISBN 1-4000-6081-8. \$29.95 (hardcover).

At the outset of this book, Edward G. Lengel recounts the various perceptions of George Washington that biographers and historians have manifested over time, beginning with the prevailing view of the former president at the time of his death, after he had been called out of retirement to oversee military operations as commander in chief of the United States army during an undeclared war with France. To most Americans in 1799, the chieftain who was buried with military honors at Mount Vernon was the country's foremost soldier first, and a man of peace and politics afterward. "Light-Horse Harry" Lee's famed eulogy embodied the popular image of the heroic Washington leading his small army through years of privation and defeat in battle to final triumph over the British. The biographies that followed depicted him in this light, beginning with Parson Mason Locke Weems's myth-making *Life and Memorable Actions of George Washington, General and Commander of the Armies of America* (1800). Inevitably, Washington was compared to history's great commanders.

Eventually the pendulum swung the other way. Digging beneath the edifice of military glory, historians uncovered a different Wash-



Washington was, as an earlier historian declared, "the indispensable man."

LENGEL REVIEW

ington, one not without personal shortcomings as well as limitations as a commander. They argued for reassessment of both his character and his abilities on the battlefield. Washington's dimming reputation was in time restored, buffed and brightened by writers who concerned themselves with his life as planter, politician, and president of the fledgling nation, whose statesmanship and unselfishness helped unite the young country. By the dawn of the twenty-first century, so far had historiography strayed from the original view of Washington as warrior that no book focusing exclusively on his military career had been published since 1899.

The need for a modern study of Washington's wartime leadership has been admirably met by Lengel, who, as an associate editor of *The Papers of George Washington* at the University of Virginia, is perfectly situated to reevaluate the gener-

al's career. A specialist in military history, Lengel is intimately acquainted with the commander's wartime correspondence and other documents. These materials, which comprise about two-thirds of the vast collection of papers that the project has so far assembled, transcribed, and published in fifty-two volumes, provide the basis for Lengel's book.

Lengel follows Washington's military career from its beginning in 1753, when the young major and adjutant of one of Virginia's four militia districts was picked by Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie to deliver an ultimatum to the French in the contested Ohio Valley. The grueling winter journey resulted in a French refusal to withdraw from the region. The subsequent defeat of Washington by French forces the following summer at Fort Necessity set the stage for the French and Indian War. A year later, Washington was aide-de-camp to Major General Edward Braddock, commander of British forces in North America, as that veteran officer led his red-jacketed army against Fort Duquesne, the French outpost at the Forks of the Ohio River. The ambush and near destruction of Braddock's army

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and the British commander's death were witnessed by Washington, whose Virginians acquitted themselves well as the army disintegrated before the onslaught of French and Indians forces. Despite the debacle near the Monongahela River, Washington emerged unscathed and something of a colonial hero.

From this disaster, Washington learned what *not* to do as a commanding officer. When placed in charge of the Virginia Regiment, he schooled himself on how to assemble, train, drill, discipline, provide for, and lead a military unit. The regiment reflected his growing maturity and performed well under his leadership during British Brigadier General John Forbes's expedition against the French in the Ohio Valley in 1758.

In the war's aftermath, Washington returned to private life and focused on his responsibilities as family man, planter, and involved citizen, his romantic notions of military glory swept away by the grim reality of warfare. Later, when selected to lead the American army on the eve of the Revolution, he expressed doubt about his credentials. Some observers charged that his self-effacing protestations were a ploy masking an overweening ambition, but Lengel credits the veracity of the letters that reveal a man not only bound to duty and willing to sacrifice his life, fortune, and even his closely guarded reputation in the colonies' cause against imperial England, but also aware of his limited experience and, estimating the odds, unsure of his ability to lead his country to victory.

During the Revolutionary War, Washington did not display the gifts of an extraordinary commander, and his impatience, stubbornness, and other failings, all recorded by various writers, testify to his ordinary human fallibility. Yet, as Lengel makes clear, his essential greatness remains intact because he did possess, as no other Ameri-

can leader did, in full measure and faultless calibration, the unique combination of overall qualities that the circumstances demanded, including those required by the battlefield. Washington was, as an earlier historian declared, "the indispensable man." In this highly recommended book, Lengel rigorously defends and reasserts that claim.

—reviewed by Donald W. Gunter,
Assistant Editor, Dictionary of Virginia Biography



Andrew Levy. *The First Emancipator: The Forgotten Story of Robert Carter, the Founding Father Who Freed His Slaves*. New York: Random House, 2005. xviii + 310 pp. ISBN 0-375-50865-1. \$25.95 (hardcover).

Neither the first emancipator nor a founding father, Robert Carter (1728–1804) was one of the wealthiest men in the United States when he set in motion a carefully designed plan to manumit approximately 450 slaves in 1791. Andrew Levy's insightful book endeavors to answer two central questions: Why did this grandson of Robert "King" Carter, this heir to privilege and power who sat on the colonial governor's council and came of age alongside Virginia's Revolutionary leaders, free his slaves while his contemporaries did not? And why have Carter and his "Deed of Gift" vanished from the narrative of American history? By examining this undeservedly obscure episode, Levy challenges the notion that the founders' equivocation on slavery was somehow an essential component of the American experience and points to the possibility of an alternative path in which the spirit of the Revolution might have liberated blacks as well as whites.

Though born into Virginia's elite ruling class, Carter marginalized himself in a variety of ways. For decades he struggled to resolve

an internal conflict between the trappings of his economic status, which depended on the maintenance of the social order, and his desire to ally himself with dissenters and outsiders. Profligate in his youth, he failed to impress his neighbors and was twice an unsuccessful candidate for the House of Burgesses during the 1750s, thus missing an opportunity to serve in the dynamic body that launched the political careers of many of the nation's founders. Carter's appointment to the council in 1758, secured through the influence of his wife's uncle, did not curtail his eccentric interests, including his affinity for religious nonconformists and his growing misgivings about the institution of slavery. Carter's actions undermined the slave economy in ways that went beyond the typical accommodations masters often deemed expedient. He alienated his wife's relatives rather than liquidate their slave property, which he controlled after his father-in-law's death; he avoided separating slave families on his own plantations, refused to sell slaves to offset his increasing tax liability, and despaired when his children sold slaves he had given them; and he sent his sons to Northern schools to prevent them from growing dependent on slavery.

Carter's empathy for his slaves intensified as he abandoned the deism of his youth and embarked on a quest for spiritual fulfillment. Captivated by the emotional preaching of dissenting ministers and profoundly impressed by the conversion experiences his slaves underwent, Carter in 1778 became the most prominent Virginian to cast his lot with the Baptists, a persecuted sect populated largely by the poor. At the Morattico church, which he supported financially, he worshiped alongside blacks and referred to them as "brothers" and "sisters." Still, he did not immedi-

ately free his slaves, though a 1782 law legalized private manumission and though he supported emancipation proposals considered by the House of Delegates. Later in the 1780s he left the increasingly proslavery Baptist church and embraced the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg's Church of the New Jerusalem, which held that the Apocalypse had already occurred and that a period of tumultuous social change was underway. This sense of upheaval convinced Carter—who, unlike the founding fathers, welcomed obscurity and had no political office to lose—that the time to liberate his slaves had arrived.

Carter's intriguing story generated little publicity in his own day and is virtually unknown to students of American history, an oversight for which Levy offers several explanations. Carter did not fit neatly into the narrative advanced by any particular group of chroniclers: Southerners ignored him because they regarded him as a traitor; Northerners were blind to nuance within the South; historians dismissed him as merely eccentric; and, not least, Carter rendered himself invisible because he did not try to communicate with posterity and wrote no eloquent denunciation of slavery. Above all, Levy asserts, Carter remains marginalized because his Deed of Gift forces modern Americans into the uncomfortable realization that his contemporaries, the architects of American government, could have transcended their vacillation about slavery and created a nation based on liberty for all. Levy's final argument—that Americans have deliberately rejected Carter because our attachment to political "incrementalism" is easier to justify when we can point to a founding generation beset by "heroic ambivalence"—is a bit overstated; no one has known enough about Carter to issue such a purposeful rejection. That is pre-

cisely why Levy has done students of Virginia and United States history such a great service by retrieving Carter from the shadows and by raising thought-provoking questions about our past and ourselves.

—reviewed by Jennifer R. Loux,
Research Associate, Dictionary of
Virginia Biography



Angela Boswell and Judith N. McArthur, eds. *Women Shaping the South: Creating and Confronting Change*. Southern Women Series. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2006. viii + 269 pp. ISBN 0-8262-1617-X. \$44.95 (hardcover).

**...he worshiped
alongside blacks and
referred to them as
"brothers" and "sisters."**

LEVY REVIEW

Women were involved in many aspects of public life long before gaining the right to vote in 1920. In Virginia, women were influential leaders and diplomats in the Powhatan chiefdom. Their voices were heard even without the franchise—in the seventeenth century, Frances Lady Berkeley made Green Spring the headquarters for burghesses and councillors who opposed the Crown's policies, while in the eighteenth, Hannah Lee Corbin boldly proposed that women who paid taxes be allowed to vote. The pivotal role of women in shaping Southern history is the subject of the essays collected in *Women Shaping the South*, the latest in a series of books developed from the Southern Conference on Women's History sponsored by the Southern Association for Women Historians.

Three of the book's ten chapters

focus on Virginia topics. Phillip Hamilton's thoughtful essay describes the experiences of gentry women and the transformation of daily life in Jeffersonian and antebellum Virginia. He addresses the long-term effect of the Revolutionary War on Virginia women's roles and concludes that the proliferation of political offices after American independence led to an increased number of women managing plantations and households in their husbands' absence. After the war, "Virginia women led very different lives," Hamilton argues, "and became very different people," especially when a drop in tobacco prices forced agricultural changes and prompted westward migration. Women guided the rebuilding of community ties in newly settled areas. They fought isolation, family strife, and physical hardships to create new lives for themselves and their families.

Women likewise participated in defining the memory and meaning of the new nation. Jean B. Lee sheds light on the little-known activities of Jane C. Washington, who worked to preserve Mount Vernon (which she inherited in 1832) and make it available to visitors—unlike Bushrod Washington, who attempted to ban steamboat passengers from the property after a rowdy group danced and spread a picnic on the mansion's lawn. For Jane Washington, who established what would later become basic protocol for visiting historic homes, Mount Vernon held transcendent importance as a national treasure.

Clayton McClure Brooks studies Mary-Cooke Branch Munford, Janie Porter Barrett, and others in examination of interracial cooperation and the making of segregation in early twentieth-century Virginia. White and black women managed to create an arena in which they could work together to improve social services for African-Americans. Brooks delves into the records of

the State Board of Charities and Corrections to trace these cross-racial reform efforts and describes how female reformers used the limited space created by segregation to publicize the needs for cooperation across the lines of race and gender. Brooks effectively demonstrates that together these women created “a unique feminine space for public work and interracial dialogue.”

Other chapters in *Women Shaping the South* present new scholarship on topics in Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, and North Carolina. Women participated in, and created, change as energetic volunteers and able fund-raisers. They raised money for orphanages, sewed clothes for the needy, and supported female missionaries. They petitioned seeking legislative action, financial aid, and divorce. As early as the 1840 presidential election, they were active in political campaigns and participated in debates on the most important issues of the day—among them slavery, the public debt, and education. They wrote letters to governors requesting pardons, appointments to office, and assistance. Throughout history, the efforts of women in the public sphere have paved the way for change.

In her essay on Confederate women in wartime North Carolina, Jacqueline Glass Campbell provides a moving account of the destruction of historical records. Soldiers raided courthouses, defaced account books, scattered papers, and tossed records outside. Some pocketed papers as souvenirs, and one spread a family Bible over the back of his horse in place of a saddle. As a result of this episode, readers of *Women Shaping the South* can better appreciate the importance of the region’s documentary heritage and its sometimes-fragmentary nature, as well as the painstaking work of the scholars represented in this volume to piece together the story of the past from primary sources. Those interested in women’s his-

tory and Southern history—from the eighteenth century to the twentieth—will find each chapter in this book a satisfying read.

—reviewed by Jennifer Davis Mc-Daid, Deputy Coordinator, State Historical Records Advisory Board



Frank Towers. *The Urban South and the Coming of the Civil War*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2004. xi + 285 pp. ISBN 0-8139-2297-6. \$45.00 (hardcover).

Slavery, secession, and the role of the planter elite in the coming of the Civil War are subjects that historians have analyzed through a microscope for the past one hundred years. Frank Towers, an associate professor of history at the University of Calgary, addresses these issues in *The Urban South and the Coming of the Civil War*, but his scholarly approach differs from most other works concerning Southern politics. *The Urban South* scrutinizes urban political development in three Southern cities in the decade leading up to the War Between the States: Baltimore, Saint Louis, and New Orleans. It is a study in local and state politics, the working class’s developing political clout, and the influence these metropolises wielded in their states’ decisions to secede or remain in the Union. Urban growth in the South’s largest cities reflected similar trends in other American municipalities across the nation.

The book is not arranged in chronological fashion; it is a topical study. Towers introduces readers to an analysis of James Henry Hammond’s “mudsill” speech, which reflected attempts by secessionists to link America’s growing sectional conflict with urban growth. As later chapters show, Southern cities increasingly became home to thousands of wage earners, a new phenomenon in

Southern culture. These property-less workers pushed for municipal reform and challenged the entrenched power of the Democratic Party through membership in the Know Nothings (American Party) and the Republican Party.

The Know Nothings in Baltimore provided public works projects for the working class and placed party loyalists in party and government bureaucracies, including the police department. Baltimore Know Nothings supported worker-based strikes and openly worked to push African-Americans and immigrants out of trades coveted by white natives. The party also used its influence to squelch voter support for the Democratic Party on Election Day. Eventually, members of Baltimore’s Reform Party were forced to align themselves with the Democratic Party to counter the Know Nothings’ influence.

Across the South, slaveholders, whose power was increasingly challenged by city workers, feared that worker-dominated municipal governments would threaten the old political order and social system that slavery supported. The Republican Party, and many Know Nothings, supported the free soil movement. In Baltimore, city dwellers opposed to the pro-Union American Party embraced secession with the Democratic Party as part of the political course. Because members of the traditional Southern leadership believed it was imperative to stop the growing Northern influence in Southern cities, secession became an increasingly valid response. In Saint Louis, the Republican Party became the workingman’s party. It was the anti-establishment parties of two of the South’s largest cities that kept Maryland and Missouri in the Union. The Know Nothing presence in New Orleans was not strong enough to counter the planter elite’s political influence.

The Urban South is divided into

six chapters, with appendices and endnotes. Towers consulted a number of manuscript collections, nineteenth-century newspapers, and various secondary sources in compiling this historical study of the South's largest cities. His endnotes provide interested scholars with other books and articles to peruse. Students of antebellum America will find this book of interest and a necessary addition to their American history library.

—reviewed by *Cassandra Britt Farrell, Map Specialist and Senior Research Archivist*



Sharon Hatfield. *Never Seen the Moon: The Trials of Edith Maxwell*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005. xvii + 286 pp. ISBN 0-252-03003-6. \$21.95 (hardcover).

In *Never Seen the Moon*, Sharon Hatfield examines the murder trials of “the Lonesome Pine Girl,” Edith Maxwell, accused of killing her father in 1935. The story, which started with a mysterious death in Pound, Virginia, quickly spread across the nation, and by the end of Maxwell’s ordeal, even Eleanor Roosevelt had loose ties to her case. Hatfield, writing from a journalist’s perspective, exposes how the young, attractive teacher from a small Appalachian town came to represent a martyr of the woman’s rights movement, an icon of the press, and a threat to traditional Appalachian values.

Hatfield begins by setting the scene of Southwest Virginia life during the 1920s and 1930s. She discusses the development and history of the area, the draw of its valuable natural resources, and the pioneers who settled it. As someone who is obviously sympathetic to Appalachian life, Hatfield includes a valuable explanation of the region’s similarity to eastern Tennessee and Kentucky and its lack of connection to Central and Tide-

water Virginia. Hatfield also writes of the Maxwell family’s ties to the area, of Edith Maxwell’s happy youth as a tomboy in Jenkins, Kentucky, and of her college experience, highly unusual for a young woman of her circumstances. After attending Radford State Teachers College (later Radford University), Maxwell reluctantly returned to Pound, where she associated with the “bright young set,” tested the boundaries of acceptable behavior,

Was he bludgeoned by his daughter...? Or did he have a freak fall...?

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and became frustrated by the limitations of small-town life.

Using an array of primary and secondary sources, including newspaper reports, court testimony, letters, and interviews, Hatfield provides a detailed narrative of the mysterious events leading up to the death of Maxwell’s father, Trigg Maxwell. Was he bludgeoned by his daughter in retaliation for his abusive and alcohol-soaked inquiries about her late-night whereabouts? Or did he have a freak fall against a meat block that caused head trauma during a heated father-daughter spat? What followed Trigg Maxwell’s death were Edith’s trials and a frenzy of national media attention akin to the O. J. Simpson fiasco. Ultimately, the story gained so much national attention that it inspired the Warner Brothers motion picture *Mountain Justice* (1937).

Along with sensationalist newspapers, which had found a perfect subject for exploitation in the young murder suspect, the National Woman’s Party found in Edith Maxwell a compelling symbol for

the struggle to change laws that excluded women from juries. “A jury of her peers,” writes Hatfield, “the birthright of every citizen, was merely a hollow promise” for Maxwell. Clearly, there were reasonable doubts as to Maxwell’s guilt. Hatfield also persuasively argues that various groups from the NWP to Hollywood production companies used the Maxwell case to advance their own agendas.

The strength of Hatfield’s work is the historical framework she creates for the story and the insight she provides on the colorful cast of characters involved in the Maxwell case, from “Cissy” Patterson, owner of the *Washington Times Herald*, to Gail Laughlin, vice chair of the National Woman’s Party. *Never Seen the Moon* includes several photographs, endnotes, a thorough bibliographic essay, and an index, always helpful to the historian and researcher. Although the book might be described as “true crime,” it reads less like a riveting narrative and more like a work of history. It is an excellent addition to libraries with interest in Appalachian history and culture, twentieth-century journalism, the progress of women’s rights in America, and law and politics in Virginia.

—reviewed by *Kelley Ewing, Lead Project Cataloger, Virginia Newspaper Project*



Joseph Blotner. *An Unexpected Life*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005. xi + 295 pp. ISBN 0-8071-3039-7. \$29.95 (hardcover).

This memoir hustles in about 300 pages through the life of a man who was an airman, author, scholar, and teacher. Joseph Blotner, who wrote biographies of William Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren, jars readers in the first five pages with his initiation as a combat flyer aboard a B-17 Flying For-

stress over Europe in the autumn of 1944. He had earned his navigator's wings just that summer. His sixth mission that autumn ended with a crash landing in Germany.

Blotner writes well of the joys of flight, the military life, and vibrant young men at risk of their lives. Details such as a sergeant's pre-dawn statement of how much fuel was in the waiting airplane as the klaxon heralded Blotner's first combat mission illustrate the matter-of-fact measurement of life and death for young people at war. The gem of his war writing is the description of his months as a prisoner of war. Captured but not injured after the crash, Blotner was sent to successive camps filled with aviators. Hunger and activities to relieve boredom were interspersed with the realization that the end of war was near. When American forces bombed nearby Nuremberg, the airmen were relieved to see red flares dropped by waves of bombers. The flares were signals to following waves to avoid bombing the camp.

After his 1945 release and repatriation, Blotner earned a doctorate in English, married, and became a professor at several colleges. He landed propitiously at the University of Virginia in 1955. Two years later, he became one of two faculty members who shepherded the university's first writer in residence, William Faulkner, in his years in Charlottesville. An assignment blossomed into a friendship so deep that Blotner served in 1962 as one of the Nobel Prize winner's pallbearers.

The book glows with descriptions of Faulkner's interactions with people. Blotner, on first meeting the Mississippian, was surprised to be addressed with "Morning, Gin'ral." The humorous story, which would be a shame to reveal, illustrates Faulkner's comfort with long silences. Blotner traveled to Mississippi to visit Faulkner at

home several times and even got to meet people who had served as models for characters in Faulkner's books in places as mundane as the grocery store. Blotner had sadder interactions as well: He brought Faulkner to a Richmond psychiatric hospital to recover from a drinking binge.

After Faulkner died, Blotner sat on the Mississippi porch with the writer's family, drink in hand, and talked about the writer and the family. This entrée formalized

He brought Faulkner to a Richmond psychiatric hospital to recover from a drinking binge.

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a few months later into writing a two-volume biography, editing a volume of letters and a book of stories, and lecturing extensively on the author. Later Blotner wrote a biography of Warren.

This memoir has its drawbacks. It is written less for readers of Faulkner than it is for scholars of Faulkner, familiar not only with the books by Faulkner but also with the books about and criticism of the writer. Be prepared to be slightly confused and to read parts more than once. The references to elements of Blotner's academic career and Blotner's round of overseas teaching fellowships are interspersed with stories of his first wife, who had significant health problems. These episodes are less interesting, although they do round out Blotner's life and provide background if readers are curious about the life of a respected and successful scholar in the mid-twentieth century. Finally, the book has no index. Although mem-

oirs do not have to have them, the better parts of this one hold treasures that would be more accessible to researchers were they easy to find. *An Unexpected Life* is worth the toil, though. Future Faulkner scholars had best read it.

—reviewed by G. W. Poindexter,
Editorial Research Fellow, Dictionary
of Virginia Biography



John Dinan. *The Virginia State Constitution: A Reference Guide*. Reference Guide to the State Constitutions of the United States, Number 42. Westport, Conn., and London: Praeger, 2006. xv + 256 pp. ISBN 0-313-33208-8. \$109.95 (hardcover).

Not since the publication in 1974 of the two-volume *Commentaries on the Constitution of Virginia* by University of Virginia law professor A. E. Dick Howard has the constitution of the commonwealth been the subject of a comprehensive reference work. One in a series of reference volumes on all of the state constitutions, Dinan's work on the Virginia constitutions differs from Howard's chiefly in that it contains full accounts of all of the conventions and constitutions of Virginia—those of 1776, 1830, 1851, 1864, 1868, 1902, and 1971, plus the aborted revision of 1861 and the significant overhaul of 1928. Howard's volumes focused on the Constitution of 1971 and the evolution of its provisions. Dinan's reference work contains good descriptions of the circumstances under which each of the state's constitutions was adopted and what its major provisions were. For that reason, the reference desk of any public or academic library that fields questions about Virginia's constitutional, legal, or political history may make good use of this thorough, well-organized, and well-researched volume.

—reviewed by Brent Tarter, Editor,
Dictionary of Virginia Biography