

From the Editor

By Lyn Miller-Lachmann

This summer the American Library Association will be holding its annual conference in New Orleans. The site had been selected years earlier, but the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina led the ALA last October to consider moving the meeting to Atlanta.

In the end, the ALA rightly chose to keep its commitment to the City of New Orleans and through its economic support to contribute to the rebuilding of the region.

I applaud the ALA's decision, just as I applauded its decision to keep its annual conference in Toronto in 2003 in spite of the SARS scare. I will be attending the conference in June—in fact will be reading from my new novel, *Dirt Cheap*, at the Live@YourLibrary stage on Saturday, June 24 at 1 p.m. I am honored to have been invited to read at this excellent series, sponsored by ALA's Office of Public Programs. For many years I have attended the readings of other authors and dreamed of presenting my own (at that time unpublished) creative work. The New Orleans reading has special meaning for me as well because some of my novel's characters come from that area, and, in various ways, they have suffered the dislocations of leaving a close-knit family and community to pursue economic opportunities in a foreign cultural environment.

Hurricane Katrina caused considerable damage to the many institutions of higher learning in the city. Among them are two of the country's oldest Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs): Dillard University and Xavier University. Xavier University is the only historically Black Catholic institution of higher learning in the United States; it trains a majority of the country's African-American pharmacists and is the top producer of African-American students for medical and dental schools. With the help of Catholic colleges and universities around the country, and many countries throughout the world, Xavier University has reopened. Dillard University, which was heavily damaged by both flooding and fires, plans to reopen its main campus for full semester classes in September 2006.

Given these two universities' heroic efforts to rebuild and reopen, it is fitting that our lead article for this issue focuses on the history and archival resources of the HBCUs. Matthew J. Paris and Marybeth Gasman's "Researching Historically Black Colleges: A History with Archival Resources" offers an overview of HBCUs from their nineteenth-century origins to the years following the civil rights movement. I urge readers not only to read this overview but also to examine carefully the extensive notes that point to key sources in archives and museums located throughout the southern United States. I recently visited Atlanta, where the wealth of information available on African-American history in general and HBCUs in particular makes any trip worthwhile.

The loss of place experienced by Gulf Coast evacuees is hard to understand for those who haven't undergone the same dislocation. For that reason, Nicholasa Mohr's essay, "The Big Apple and the Manhattan Mango: Symbols of Nuyorican Nostalgia," is particularly compelling. Mohr grew up in Spanish Harlem but spent five decades living elsewhere, and her return to El Barrio in May 2001 led her to reflect on her culture as embodied in the place where she lives. Mohr, a gifted writer of plays, essays, and fiction for adults and children, brings the Barrio of yesterday and today to life and shows us why places like Spanish Harlem, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast are worth saving in all their diversity.

An understanding of and appreciation for language diversity has long been a feature of *MultiCultural Review*. This issue is no exception, with one article and two columns devoted to aspects of language. In "Fighting for Justice—Translating Haitian Literature into English: An Interview with Scholar and Translator Carrol F. Coates," Danilo H. Figueredo, who recently edited the *Encyclopedia of Caribbean Literature*, explores the career of this venerable translator. Coates began his career translating the works of Quebecois novelists but moved on to post-

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colonial writers from Francophone Africa and the Caribbean. In doing so, he brought to the attention of the U.S. reading public such outstanding and previously ignored novelists as Jacques Stephen Alexis, René Despestre, and Dany Laferrière from Haiti and Ahmadou Kourouma from Côte d'Ivoire. In addition to talking about the process of translating from French to English, Coates addresses the place of Krèyol in Haitian literature and the challenges of writing literary fiction in and translating from a language that has existed in written form only since the mid-twentieth century.

In this installment of her twice-yearly column on recommended books for children and adolescents, Isabel Schon highlights one of the first books published in Spanish to address the September 11 attacks and the war in Iraq. The novel for adolescents, published originally in Spain, describes a family divided by the previous Spanish government's decision to send troops to Iraq to support the U.S. invasion. Other books recommended in this column include a volume in the popular Harry Potter series, collections of fairy tales and folktales, literary classics, and books related to the elementary and middle school social studies curriculum.

For the first time ever, an installment of "Bridges on the I-Way: Multicultural Resources Online" addresses resources in Spanish. Because so many Internet users utilize this resource to research health-related topics, Frank Alan Bruno has provided a guide to Spanish-language consumer health sites, from general overviews and medical dictionaries to sites addressing specific conditions such as diabetes or cancer and sites to help people who lack health insurance for themselves or their children.

This issue marks the changing of the guard for one of our regular columns. Since 2000, Renee Rude has capably authored "Continuing Diversity." In doing so, she has brought to light outstanding serials and special issues in women's studies, education, and the social sciences. In addition, she initiated our reviews of serial publications that have young readers as their primary audience. She is retiring from the column, though she will continue to write articles and review books for *MCR* pertaining to persons with disabilities and how libraries can enhance access to information for those who have disabilities. Beginning with the next issue, Pamela M. Salela, a former colleague of Rude's at St. Cloud State University, will be taking over "Continuing Diversity." Salela, who is now at the University of Illinois at Springfield, will continue Rude's focus on publications in the social sciences, education, and women's studies but also plans to devote some of the columns to an in-depth review essay on a single start-up or special issue of unusual significance. We welcome Salela to *MCR* and look forward to reading her columns in the years to come. Because we do not want to slight the literary side of the serials world, we will also be featuring guest columnists from time to time who will review recently published literary magazines with a multicultural focus. 📖

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