

ASAIL NOTES

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MLA CONVENTION

Sessions. ASAIL's two meetings were very well attended, with audiences of around 40 people. And at both sessions audiences were very active, engaging the panelists and each other in dialogue. There were also a lot of new faces in the audience, a good sign.

Business Meeting. The business meeting brought about 20 people. On one of the main items on the agenda--publications--the editor of ASAIL NOTES and the editor of STUDIES IN AMERICAN INDIAN LITERATURE (SAIL)--agreed to work cooperatively as much as possible. Already mailing lists have been exchanged, though at present a unified subscription fee seems unwieldy with the publications originating at different institutions. New publications and projects were noted, with a strong endorsement for all ASAIL members to return questionnaires and submit essays to Ken Roemer (U Tx-Arlington) on the WAY TO RAINY MOUNTAIN volume he is editing for MLA's Teaching Masterpieces of World Literature Series. Results of the ASAIL Survey (see below) were announced and discussed.

Elections. Susan Scarberry-Garcia (Colorado College) succeeds Andrew Wiget (New Mexico S U) as President of ASAIL for 1986. David Littlefield (U Arkansas-Little Rock) was voted President-Elect for 1987. Our congratulations and thanks.

Call For Papers: Next Year's Meeting in New York. ASAIL, President Susan Scarberry-Garcia has issued a call for papers for ASAIL's two session in 1986. For a session entitled, "Oral Texts: Interpretations and Transcriptions," please send papers or one-page abstracts to Susan Scarberry-Garcia, Southwest Studies, Colorado College, by March 15. For a session entitled "Native American Poetry and Song", send papers or one-page abstracts to Daniel Littlefield, English Dept, U Arkansas-Little Rock, by March 15.

PUBLICATION NEWS

Good News!!! Leslie Silko's CEREMONY and James Welch's WINTER IN THE BLOOD will be available for a long time to come. Penguin will publish these titles under their imprint in paperback (\$5.95) beginning in March 1986, when they will join the Bantam Windstone paperback (\$6.95) of Louise Erdrich's LOVE MEDICINE Another useful reprint comes from University of Arizona Press: Frank Cushing's ZUNI FOLKTALES will be available in paper (\$12.95) in March. U Arizona Press also has three new titles: Barbara {2} Babcock's study

of the relationship between storytelling and figurative ceramics, *THE PUEBLO STORYTELLER*, Muriel Painter's *WITH GOOD HEART: YAQUI BELIEFS AND CEREMONIES IN PASCUA*, and John Westover's edition of a most remarkable autobiography, *A PAPAGO TRAVELER: THE MEMORIES OF JAMES McCARTHY*. Beacon Press is publishing Paula Gunn Allen's essays under the title, *THE SACRED HOOP: RESTORING THE FEMININE IN AMERICAN INDIAN TRADITIONS* (\$22.95) . . . Maurice Kenny's selected poems, *BETWEEN TWO RIVERS: SELECTED POEMS* is available from White Pine Press, 76 Center Street, Fredonia, NY 14063 (\$10.00) . . . Finally, a very exciting book: Matthias Schubnell's *N. SCOTT MOMADAY: THE CULTURAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND* (U Oklahoma Press, \$19.95), a comprehensive discussion of Momaday's work, produced with Momaday's full cooperation, and highlighted by a thorough bibliography.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

People's Republic of China. Jarold Ramsey's *Coyote Was Going There: Indian Literature from the Oregon Country* has been translated by Shi Kun and published by the Chinese Folk Literature Press (Beijing, 1983).

Soviet Union. Alex Vaschenko writes of several events and publications in the USSR of interest to ASAIL members:

1. The Institute on World Literatures has published an essay collection: "{cyrillic}". In the opening article of the monograph, "Indian America and American Literature of the Colonial Period," Vaschenko describes his sense of the several ways Native American and Anglo American literary traditions might have interacted.
2. Vaschenko's translation of "Native Arts of North America" by the Viennese scholar, Christian Feest, was published in the Soviet Union In December.
3. The Second All-Union Symposium on Native American Studies was held on November 14-16 near Moscow under the auspices of the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. The topic: "American Indians and Ecology," comprehended about 40 reports on different aspects of Native America (North, Central and South), mostly ethnographic. Vaschenko's report was the sole literary one. His topic: "Ecology of Soul: Nature in Native American Poetics." The first All-Union Symposium, held in 1982, had as its topic, "Historical Destinies of the American Indians." Proceedings were recently published as : "{cyrillic}."

MEETINGS AND SYMPOSIA

PEN International Congress, New York City, February 20. "Native American Symposium", chair: Dennis Tedlock. Participants: Ray Young Bear, Alfonso Ortiz, Allen Burus, David Guss, and Howard Norman.

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Daughters of the Desert: Women Anthropologists in the Southwest, 1880-1980. Friday March 14, Tucson, AZ. Sponsored by SIROW (Southwest Institute for Research on Women). A public session on women artists in the Southwest, chaired by Larry Evers, will feature Wendy Rose and Leslie Silko. \$5.00 registration fee. Contact SIROW, ph. (602)621-7338.

Plains Indian Cultures: Past and Present Meanings. March 20-22, 1986. A symposium sponsored by the Center for Great Plains Studies, U Nebraska-Lincoln. Will feature a public address by N. Scott Momaday, "Plains Cultural Change and the Force of Ancient Vision," Friday, March 21, 7:30 pm, and many sessions on Saturday of particular interest to students of American Indian Literature. Registration fee: \$55. For further information, contact Dept. of Conferences, U Nebraska, ph. (402) 472-2844.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wanbli Ho. Simon Ortiz and Charlene Lowry are reactivating WANBLI HO, a biannual Native American literary magazine. Simon Ortiz is currently teaching at Sinte Gleska College. To subscribe to WANBLI HO, send \$7.50/yr to either person, c/o Wanbli Ho, Lakota Studies Department, Sinte Gleska College, PO Box 8, Mission, SD 57555, U. S. A.

New Journal. ASAIL member Kathleen Ashley (U Southern Maine) invites interested readers to submit articles to the JOURNAL OF RITUAL STUDIES where she is a member of the editorial board. Send to: Dr. Fred Clothey, Assoc. Ed., Dept. of Religious Studies, 2604 CL, U Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, U.S.A.

Renewals. Continued support is needed to sustain important new enterprises. If you have not yet done so, subscribe or resubscribe to:

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. . . By Any Other Name. The literary journal of the Institute of American Indian Arts, formerly Spawning the Medicine River, is now titled Tyuonyi. Biannual, \$12.00/yr., individual. Write Phil Foss, TATA Press, St. Michael's Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87501.

IDENTITY AND DIRECTION: REFLECTIONS ON THE ASAIL NOTES SURVEY

In 1985 ASAIL NOTES sent a survey to all who receive the newsletter seeking descriptive information about the membership, its curriculum and its sense of the field. Nearly fifty individuals responded. The only obvious skewing I could discern (having struggled through Elementary Statistics as an undergrad with a "D") is a disproportionately low response from our foreign colleagues, so I do believe the survey gives an accurate picture of what is happening in the United States.

Membership Profile. Most of us teach in comprehensive, public universities, outnumbering our private college colleagues two to one. For the most part we teach in English Departments, on a semester system. Nearly eighty percent of us have Ph.D.'s, the majority in English but a third have advanced degrees in other fields such as Anthropology, Linguistics, Education, History and Foreign Languages. We are a diverse lot.

Curriculum. The most common courses offered by ASAIL members were a single term survey in NA Literature, combining both oral and written literatures and a course on Modern Native American Literature. Over half the respondents said they offered such courses at some time or another. These two were also the most frequently offered courses with 15% of the respondents saying they offered each every other term and another 20% saying they offered the survey course every third term. Most such courses were given major elective credit in English Departments, but less than 10% were required for the major. Most respondents, over half, said they taught some NA literature in other literature courses. By far the most frequently taught novel (over 50%) was Ceremony, followed by House Made of Dawn (23%), with the other novels picking up less than 5 responses each. Selection of anthologies and Oral Literature texts varies widely with no consensus, though of anthologies The Remembered Earth and Songs From This Earth on Turtle's Back have a limited following. Of individual volumes of poetry, Simon Ortiz' Going For The Rain or From Sand Creek are the most widely used (12 votes), with other titles having only one or two votes.

Most of our classes are offered at the upper-division level to degree-seeking students, predominantly Anglo (85%). Though some classes have mixed Indian/Anglo enrollment (10%), few (less than 5%) have mostly Indian students. Average class size is 15.

Sense of the Field. In response to VI A & B on the status of the field, no clearly majority opinion emerged, but several views claimed from 10-20% of the response. The largest plurality said that what was needed was for ASAIL members to publish more sophisticated criticism and to attempt to place these essays in mainstream academic journals (American Lit, Western Am Lit, New Literary History, etc). And a very large plurality said that what they really needed was well-contextualized oral literature. Other opinions urged keeping classics in print, better library collections at their schools, a larger fund (or any at all!) for readings, and targeting high school teachers or students to develop an earlier interest in the subject. In terms of inviting speakers, many ASAIL members have done so, some quite extensively. Only a few said they did not know how to contact potential speakers. Most complained of money: the schools supplying too little or the writers asking too much

See my invitation to comment on the survey on p. 8 of the current issue.

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NETWORKS

American Native News is the newsletter of the American Indian and Alaska Native Newspapers and Periodicals Project. Write Daniel Littlefield, Department of English, 502 Stabler Hall, University of Arkansas, 33rd and University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72204.

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ASAIL MAILING LIST

In order to promote communication among those interested in Native American literature, the editor of ASAIL NOTES will print a special issue in the spring listing the addresses of all those receiving the NOTES both in the United States and around the world. If, for whatever reason, you do not want your address so published, contact the editor by April 15 so that your name can be withdrawn. Having said that, I hope that most will realize the importance such a directory can serve, especially given the diverse nature of our group, and choose to participate.

COMMENTS

The Editor invites comment from ASAIL members concerning any inferences they can make about the results of the ASAIL survey. He also wishes to solicit information from NOTES readers, reminding them that a newsletter's effectiveness depends on input from members. This shouldn't be a one reporter rag.