

# ASAIL NOTES

4.2 / may 87

Editor: Andrew Wiget, Dept. of English, New Mexico S U, Las Cruces, NM 88005

## MLA MEETING NEWS

The ASAIL Business Meeting, held in conjunction with the MLA's annual convention, is developing into a useful forum for getting a number of things done. This year's participants numbered about twenty and included Helen Jaskoski, Cal State-Fullerton, serving as liaison with MELUS. This year at its luncheon meeting, also in conjunction with MLA, MELUS honored LaVonne Ruoff for her many substantial contributions to the study and teaching of Native American literature.

Also attending was Franco Meli, U Milano, Italy, who informed us of what is happening in Europe. He notes an anthology in the works of translations of contemporary Indian poetry, including Welch, Momaday and Silko. European interest in Indian life prior to 1890 focusses on the historical and ethnographic, in modern Indian life on the political. Meli regularly teaches a seminar on contemporary NA literature which enrolls 40-60 people.

Elections were held for ASAIL posts. Those elected to serve in 1987 include:

President: Daniel Littlefield, English Dept., U Arkansas-Little Rock  
President-Elect: Kathleen Sands, Arizona State U, Tempe, AZ

In other business, a number of useful announcements and projects came forward. Daniel Littlefield reported that the American Native Press Archives at the U of Arkansas-Little Rock now catalogues 800 titles with over 10,000 issues, They are putting together Union Lists. Scott Momaday has written introduction to NA Lit in forthcoming Cambridge History of American Literature.

There was also some discussion of getting MLA to sponsor a "10 Years Later" retrospective conference, assessing the fruits of the Flagstaff conference sponsored by MLA in 1977 which really began to cohere our field. Andrew Wiget subsequently brought this up at the February meeting of MLA's CLLA. They in turn agreed to forward it to the Executive Committee. The MLA will not sponsor (read: fund) the conference itself but the Exec. Comm.'s endorsement is needed to use MLA's name on a grant proposal to NEH: Conferences.

Finally, two projects of importance. The MLA's Commission on the Languages and Literatures of America is thinking of developing a master catalogue of audio and video tapes of Native American literature. It was agreed to survey the membership to see what is out there (see

separate {2} article below). Brian Swann spoke of 'reviving' the dormant *Dictionary of Native American Literature*. It was agreed this would be a useful project for ASAIL and that the membership would have a professional interest in contributing to it. (see separate article below)

## **NEW STUFF . . .**

Is there anyone yet who has not seen Larry Evers and Felipe Molina's, Maso Bwikam/Yaqui Deer Songs: A Native American Poetry (University of Arizona, 1987)? This work sets new standards for collaborative presentation of a rich genre of indigenous poetry. A must have!

The new, twice-yearly European Review of Native American Studies, edited by Christian Feest, combines a journal section, featuring articles, reviews, etc. and a newsletter section, announcing meetings, and referencing *CEBONAIS*, the Current European Bibliography of Native American Studies. Another must! Write: European Review of NAS, c/o Pál Faklen, Lapkiadó Vállalt, Lenin krt. 9-11, H-1073 Budapest VII, Hungary. No price listed.

New in paperback from Arizona: Pauline Johnson's historical treatment of Canadian Native women The Mocassin Maker, with an introduction and notes by A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff.

## **. . . AND FORTHCOMING**

Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat's Recovering the Word: Essays on Native American Literature, aka "Son of Smoothing is on schedule and should be out from University of California Press in late summer. That would be just in time to join their other collaborative effort: I Tell You Now: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers, forthcoming from U of Nebraska, featuring autobiographical essays by the likes of Harjo, Hogan, Ortiz, Bruchac, Rose, Kenny, Vizenor, etc.

## **NETWORKS**

NAPBC Newsletter, bimonthly newsletter of the Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium, Inc., Box 83111, Lincoln, NE 68501 (402)472-3522. Info, on issues and programming concerning Native Americans on public radio and TV. Brief synopses of films and videos which are distributed through NAPBC. Job announcements in broadcast media.

Journal of Alaska Native Arts, produced bimonthly by the Institute of Alaska Native Arts, Inc. P.O. Box 80583, Fairbanks, AK (905) 456-7491, -7406. Features two pages each issue of creative writing by Alaska native authors, reports on native arts, interviews (w/ Mary TallMountain, Nov/Dec 1986). Nicely done.

## **PEOPLE**

DELL HYMES will be at the Department of Anthropology University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903, after June 1987. . . . RAY YOUNG BEAR has been teaching in the MFA Creative Writing Program at Eastern Washington University. . . . LANCE HENSON has returned from what seems to have become an annual winter tour of Europe.

### **IN MEMORIAM: CAROL A. HUNTER**

Professor Carol A. Hunter (Osage), born in 1937, died of pancreatic cancer on 12 March 1987. Professor Hunter received her B.S. in Economics and Education in 1961, her M.A. in English Literature from Oklahoma State University in 1972, and her Ph.D. in American Literature from the University of Denver in 1978. Prior to her death, she was assistant professor of English at the University of Oklahoma. Professor Hunter had also been a visiting professor in the Department of English at the University of California, Los Angeles, and an instructor both in the Department of Humanities, Rose Junior College, Midwest City, Oklahoma, and at the Institute of American Indian Art, Santa Fe.

Professor Hunter's research had resulted in two important articles on John Joseph Matthews (Osage) and a draft of an edition of the satirical "Fus Fixico" essays by Alexander Posey (Creek), on which she had been working before she became ill.

Among the postdoctoral awards she received are the following: NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers: American Indian Literature, 1979; Ford Foundation/Newberry Library Fellowship, 1980-81; American Indian Culture and Research Fellowship, Fall 1983; Fullbright Scholarship to France, 1985-86.

Professor A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, University of Illinois at Chicago, who had worked closely with Professor Hunter, described her as a dedicated scholar committed to her Osage people, to introducing students to American Indian literatures, and to advancing our knowledge of this field through her own scholarship. "Carol was a warm, gentle, fun-loving person who had many more important contributions to make to the field. Her death is not only a genuine loss to her family and friends but also to the profession. As a person and a scholar, Carol is a worthy role model for Indian young people."

### **PEN TRANSLATION TALK**

The 1986 \$1,000 PEN Translation award for poetry went to Dennis Tedlock for his nine-year project, Popol Vuh: The Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life (Simon & Schuster, avail, in paper). . . . The PEN Newsletter (#60, December 1986) features a transcript of the Pen Symposium, "Native American Literature: The Problems of Translation, featuring Tedlock, Allan Burns (Yucatec Maya literature), Alfonso Ortiz (Tewa), Howard Norman (Cree literature) and Harold Littlebird (Laguna/Santo Domingo).

### **SEMINARS ABOUNDING**

In announcing in the last issue of ASAIL NOTES Larry Evers' NEH Summer Seminar on "American Indian Verbal Art and Literature," the editor inadvertently overlooked another offering.

NEH has funded a Summer Institute for College Teachers, directed by Clara Sue Kidwell at the University of California, Berkeley, entitled "Great Traditions in American Indian Thought: A Historical and Philosophical Approach." It will focus on topics such as cosmology, ethics, aesthetics and so on . . . an exciting course of study.

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## **CALLS FOR ARTICLES**

Articles dealing with the life and work of D'Arcy McNickle are being sought for a special issue of American Indian Quarterly.

Papers are being solicited for the American Indian Literature Section of Rocky Mountain MLA.

For both, contact:

Professor William Thackeray

Indian Studies

Northern Montana College

Havre, MT 59501

## **REMINDER . . . . .**

Please fill out the enclosed forms surveying your participation in the Media Catalog project and in the *Dictionary of Native American Literature*. These are the kinds of projects that can give weight to the name *professional* organization and provide visibility and coherence within the academic community for the literature about which we care.