

The Journey

THE WINCHESTER MULTICULTURAL NETWORK NEWSLETTER

**“Soon we will all be together and more of us will be brown.
The changes in our state are happening before our eyes.
Our understanding of these changes must keep pace or there will be problems.
Our social health requires us to fight the racism in ourselves, our communities, and our institutions.
We will all benefit from a kinder, gentler, world.”**

Mary Pipher from her book *The Middle of Everywhere*



WINCHESTER
MULTICULTURAL
NETWORK

We Educate, Advocate and Respond.

EDITORS:

**DOTTY BURSTEIN AND
SANDY THOMPSON**

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Looking Ahead

DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

The Network has an exciting schedule of programs planned for the coming months:

CELEBRATING THE BIRTHDAY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Monday, January 19, 2009

Metcalf Hall, Winchester Unitarian Church (corner of Main St. and Mystic Valley Parkway)

3:00-5:00 p.m.

The Network’s annual family celebration with entertainment, crafts, books for sale, and displays of art and writing by Winchester students.

There is no school on Dr. King’s birthday, but you can mark the holiday with us! Bring the kids to participate in craft activities and view the wonderful display of art and writing from Winchester students. Book Ends will have a selection of books for both children and adults, and we’ll have entertainment everyone will enjoy. All are welcome and the event is free.

6:30-8:00 p.m.

An informal reception/Pre-Inauguration celebration, and talk by Kim McLarin, host of WGBH’s program *Basic Black*. Save the date!

Kim McLarin is a former journalist for the *New York Times*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *Associated Press* and is currently writer-in-residence at Emerson College in Boston and host of WGBH’s *Basic Black*. *Basic Black* is Boston’s longest-running weekly television program devoted exclusively to African American themes. It airs on WGBH on Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 12:30 p.m.

She is the author of the award-winning novel, *Jump at the Sun* which was nominated for a 2007 Hurston/Wright Legacy Award in fiction, chosen by the Black Caucus of the American Library Association as a 2007 Fiction Honor Book, and chosen by the Massachusetts Center for the Book as a 2007 Massachusetts Book Awards Honor Book. She is also the author of critically-acclaimed novels *Taming It Down* and *Meeting of the Water*.

We are thrilled to welcome Kim McLarin to Winchester!

With the inauguration of the United States’ first African-American president on January 20, this year’s events marking Dr. Martin Luther King’s birthday take on special significance. We hope you’ll join us!

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International Connections



FILM SERIES

Monday evenings at 6:30 p.m. on January 12, February 9, March 9, and April 13.

International Connections and the Winchester Public Library are collaborating on a Monday evening international film series starting Monday, January 12 and continuing February 9, March 9, and April 13. On January 12 the series will begin with the film *The Visitor* and on February 9 the feature will be *The Golden Door*. Watch for more information.

The films will be shown in the Meeting Room of the Winchester Public Library and will start promptly at 6:30 p.m. Begin your week with a treat! Escape the chill of winter in the warm company of friends new and old and enjoy a good movie.

ENGLISH CONVERSATION GROUPS

English conversation groups take time off during the holidays and resume after the new year. The Wednesday evening conversation group begins again after February school vacation week. For questions or more information about the Wednesday group, call Liz Sayre at 781-729-9242. For information about the Monday morning group, call Nancy Dahm at 781-729-9387 or email office@wmcn.org.

DROP-IN COFFEE

Thursday mornings between 8:30 and 10:00 a.m.
Café Dolce, 831 Main St., Winchester

Stop in and enjoy coffee and informal conversation.

Newcomers Guide to Winchester

An attractive new guide designed specifically for newcomers from other countries was published this fall and is available at the Library and schools. The idea came from ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) instructors in our schools and was developed by International Connections member Anna Buxton. Anna was a newcomer herself several years ago and knows the kind of information that newcomers find most helpful. The Network plans to update and re-publish the guide each year providing we can secure funding. This first edition was designed and printed, thanks to a grant from the Northwest Suburban Health Alliance/CHNA 15 DoN funds from Lahey Clinic.

You can also find it on our website: www.wmcn.org.

Looking Ahead

DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR (continued from page 1)

HUMANKIND

At the Griffin Museum of Photography until January 11
67 Shore Road, Winchester

The *Humankind* exhibition is intended to show how photography can dynamically explain mankind to man. In these photographs we see the gamut of everyday life. We also can see the inference of juxtaposed realities through the photographer's lens. The message imbued in these photographs is one of hope despite the often dark and turbulent truths of living in today's world.

CIVIL RIGHTS TIMELINE

February (date and location to be announced)

"Who Does She Think She Is?"

A FILM AND DISCUSSION WITH FILMMAKER PAMELA BOLL

Sunday, March 8 (location and time to be announced)

Pamela Tanner Boll's documentary profiles five women artists—two sculptors, a painter, and a printmaker—who manage to juggle family life and pursue their artistic endeavors. We are looking forward to this compelling documentary and to meeting the filmmaker, who is also an artist, writer, and feminist activist—and a wife and mother. What a great way to mark Women's History Month!

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Mid-March on a Friday evening from 7:00-9:00 p.m.,
continuing Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Watch for news of our annual community workshop which we offer in March to anyone who lives or works in Winchester. This workshop brings together individuals who are interested in continuing efforts to make Winchester a place where everyone feels valued and welcome, no matter what his/her race, religion, age, sexual orientation, or socio-economic class.

Participants will learn a framework for understanding multicultural issues of all kinds in a positive setting with constructive guidelines for discussion. Those who attend will learn tools for addressing racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, heterosexism, and other "isms" using these same guidelines.

Our workshop leader is Angela Giudice, an educator and community activist who has provided consultation and training on multicultural issues since 1976 and who has worked closely with the Multicultural Network for many years. Be sure to let us know your email so we can inform you of dates and details!

Winchester as a Multicultural Community—a Sampling

(We welcome contributions to this column. Send a line or two to office@wmcn.org)

- The Multicultural Club at McCall Middle School brings together students interested in getting to know one another across cultures of all kinds.
- The Winchester Public Library held a wonderful celebration of the International Day of Peace on September 23. The event included Indian and Chinese dance performances and Chinese crafts.
- The Winchester Public Library has an information sheet about the Library that has been translated into Spanish, Chinese, and Russian. The Library has also begun to purchase a few magazines and newspapers in languages other than English.
- The Muraco School celebrated the cultural diversity of the school with an event in September that featured food, dance and other activities.
- Members of Temple Shir Tikvah participated in a cooking class featuring the cuisine of South Korea.
- Book groups all over town read Winchester Reads 2008 selection, *Run* by Ann Patchett. This novel touches on issues of race, class, and adoption.
- The Parish of the Epiphany hosted a concert by an 11-man group of Zulu a cappella singers from South Africa.
- The International Connections Committee of the Network hosted its ninth annual International Pot Luck Supper on

November 2. The event featured food from all parts of the world and entertainment by students from the O’Shea-Chaplin Academy of Irish Dance.

- The Student Service Council at Lincoln School sponsored a “Mix-It-Up Lunch” for Grades 3–5 on Thursday, November 13. “The Mix-it-Up-Lunch” is a program started by the Southern Poverty Law Center and hundreds of schools participate nation-wide.
- Multiculturalism at the Winchester Community Music School:

25% of the WCMS faculty is international

Many of the WCMS faculty have specialties in non-western music such as Klezmer, Brazilian, Flamenco, Eastern European folk music, and South American folk music. The core curriculum of the WCMS early childhood music classes is based in Dalcroze Eurhythmics, which was developed by French-Swiss music educator Emile Jaques-Dalcroze in the early 1900s.

Three upcoming concerts in the WCMS Faculty recital series feature four different international faculty members. They include Russian-born pianist Olga Talroze on February 9; Romanian-born vocalist Adriana Ausch with Japanese pianist Eiko Ishizuka on March 16; and Bolivian pianist Jorge Ibanez on April 13.

Brio—a new opportunity for theater that includes people with disabilities

Winchester has a new organization: **Brio Integrated Theater**, a fledgling non-profit started by Sahar Ahmed Awerbuch, whom we are proud to say, is a member of the Multicultural Network board. Sahar’s goal is to shatter prejudices and misconceptions about people with disabilities in the arts, and in November she brought the Amici Dance Theater of London to Winchester for a workshop that brought together people of different ages and abilities.

“For years, people with disabilities have fought negative images and stereotypes and have been denied equal opportunity within their communities,” she says. “Theater creates for people with disabilities an outlet for creativity and expression that is endless and where they have the freedom to express themselves without physical or social barriers. By engaging in the arts, people with disabilities are able to contribute to their communities as well as break old stereotypes and prejudices, creating a community that is representative of all people.” For more information, contact Sahar at s.ahmed@briotheater.org.

Chinese New Year Spectacular

Our friends at the Winchester School of Chinese Culture would like us to know about the upcoming Chinese New Year Spectacular. See <http://www.divineArts.org/boston> for details. Performances will be January 10 and 11 at the Opera House in Boston and will include dance and music in the Chinese cultural tradition performed by Divine Arts on a 20-country tour.

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True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
from *The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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“... in his short life, Dr. King, by his preaching, his example, and his leadership helped to move us closer to the ideals on which America was founded.”

President Ronald Reagan in the proclamation proclaiming the first observance of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



BOOK REVIEWS

The Middle of Everywhere by Mary Pipher (Reviewed by Sandy Thompson)

It had been a while since I read this book, first published in 2002, but with immigrant and refugee issues continually in the news, I went back for a second look. Writing just before 9/11 the author, on first reflection, wondered if what she had written had meaning in the light of the tragic events of that day. Ultimately, she decided the messages it offers were even more important, and I agree wholeheartedly. Like Pipher's other books, *Reviving Ophelia*, *Hunger Pains*, *The Shelter of Each Other*, and *Another Country*, this one is written in a comfortable, accessible style that invites the reader into her world and her research.

This book focuses on Pipher's exploration of the issues faced by refugees in her hometown of Lincoln, Nebraska. Many of those issues are common to anyone coming here from another country, though refugees most often come with stories of hardship, violence, and many losses. Her message to readers is one we can take to heart: become involved with newcomers and learn from them. Looking at America through the eyes of those who are new to the country and

trying to decipher American culture, Pipher reaches out to individuals and families from countries as diverse as Siberia, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Viet Nam, and Sudan. In the process, she freely admits, she had moments of discomfort and made mistakes and faux pas. On one occasion, she was meeting with a Sudanese family from the Kakuma refugee camp and experienced some momentary anxiety. "I had to admit I harbored the rudiments of racism, an unconscious attitude I fight daily, but that none of us can totally escape." And she goes on to say that, "like many people who have lived mostly in a world of their own kind, I was clumsy with people who didn't look and talk like me. I worried I wouldn't be able to understand people for whom English was a second, third or fifth language... I was embarrassed that I was fluent only in English."

Pipher talks of how she sees newcomers as needing cultural brokers—someone to explain our traditions and to answer their questions—and asks, "What happens to newcomers without American friends?"

Cultural brokers, she says, "understand local resources and have a commitment to helping newcomers avoid mistakes that can slow down their adjustment." Pipher assures us, "It is natural to feel shy and anxious around newcomers. We are all a little fearful of strangers. That first reaction is nothing to be ashamed of as long as our second reaction is to learn more about the other's humanity."

Throughout the school year the author regularly visits classrooms where English Language Learners (ELL) from a huge range of cultures are guided and taught by ELL teachers. In Pipher's book these teachers are cheerleaders, cultural brokers, instillers of hope, and sometimes even comedians.

This book is one I will read yet again. It is filled with stories that are poignant in ways that are both heartbreaking and heartwarming. I learn from Mary Pipher's experiences and from those of the people she meets and helps. I am sure you will enjoy it!

Resources for English Language Learning

The Winchester Public Library has many resources for learning English, including books, CDs, DVDs, and other materials for people of all ages learning English. The collection for adults is in the Reference Room. The Children's Department collection includes bilingual books, some with accompanying tapes or CDs, and materials to help children learn English and other languages. Please ask the Reference and Children's librarians for help.

The library also has the **Rosetta Stone** software for learning English, which you can use on the Library's computers. **Learning Express Library** is an online resource that is available at the library for everyone and for home use by Winchester residents. It offers lessons and practice for the GED and the TOEFL tests.

The **Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC)** is a year-round, not-for-profit adult education center located in Malden. Its mission is to provide free English classes to adult immigrants and refugees with the goal of helping them to become successful workers, parents, and community members. ILC also promotes immigrants as assets to America. Check out www.ilctr.org for detailed information.

English At Large provides free English (ESOL/ESL) and basic literacy instruction to adults throughout 20 Boston-area communities. Every year, trained volunteers help hundreds of adults improve their English literacy. For information, call 781-395-2374 or email volunteer@englishatlarge.org or learn@

englishatlarge.org. If you are interested in volunteering, call or email the office for a schedule of training sessions.

Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE) provides classes and support services to adult students (16 years and older) who need basic reading, writing and math skills, English instruction for non-native speakers, or a high school credential. Preference is given to Somerville residents, but Winchester residents have participated in English Language Learners Instruction. The Network's own Liz Sayre teaches there. For information, call 617-625-6600, ext. 6900 or go to the Somerville Public Schools website: www.somerville.k12.ma.us

Resources for Learning Languages (other than English)

The Winchester Public Library has books, CDs and Playaways (similar to iPods) to help you learn languages such as Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, Yiddish, and more.

Recommended websites that offer free language learning resources (recommended by the library):

www.bbc.co.uk/languages/
www.french.about.com

www.spanish.about.com
www.italian.about.com

Is Racism Over?

A commentary by Rev. Eric Dupee

Like many Americans, I turn to *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* on the Comedy Central Network for their unique perspectives on politics. On the night following the election of America's first black president, Stephen Colbert announced, "Tonight, I sit down with civil rights pioneer Andrew Young. I'm not sure what we'll talk about now that racism is over."

Of course, we laugh when Colbert makes these kinds of proclamations because we recognize the absurdity. Or do we? When it was announced that Barack Obama would be the next president of the United States, commentators began speaking about America as a "post-racial" society. On CNN, Anderson Cooper asked his panel of experts "Does anyone know what this means in terms of race relations in the United States?" Commentator Bill Bennett, formerly the Secretary of Education responded, "You don't take any excuse anymore from anybody who says the deck is stacked, or I can't do anything, or there is so much in-built this and that."

There is no question that the election of an African American as president is a great milestone worth celebrating. It means something, but it doesn't mean that racism is over. Oprah Winfrey, Tiger Woods, and Barack Obama attaining fame and fortune does not change the fact that there are significant barriers and obstacles in the way of many people of color. Contrary to the assessment of Bill Bennett, the deck is still stacked—evidenced by the following:

Many inner city schools predominantly made up of students of color are grossly under resourced.

On average, black Americans have one eighth the financial net worth of whites.

Although the prevalence of illegal drug use among white men is approximately the same as that among black men, black men are five times more likely to be arrested.

Studies have shown that when applying for a job, those with black-sounding names were 50 percent less likely to get a callback than those with white-sounding names with comparable resumes.

In his book *Uprooting Racism*, Paul Kivel writes, "Racism is self-sustaining. It can allow white people to be friendly to people of color . . . and still collude with institutional policies that continue racial injustice. The patterns are so well set in place that we can even allow some people of color to become successful, and little will change." In other words, racism is so ingrained in our educational, judicial, religious, health care and economic systems, that the election of a black president won't automatically make much of a difference. What will make a difference is ordinary people recognizing the ways in which they collude with policies that grant advantages to white people and then working to dismantle those policies.

The election of Barack Obama does not end racism; it is one important milestone in an ongoing struggle to overcome it. It provides us what might be a very brief window of time in which the American people are just a little more receptive to thinking about and examining race. Can we make the most of this opportunity? In the words of one campaign slogan: Yes, we can!

Some Thoughts in the Aftermath of the Presidential Election . . .

As this issue of *The Journey* goes to press (early because of the holidays) we are celebrating the election of America's first African-American president and basking in a hopeful glow. At the same time, the country is struggling with a serious financial crisis. As the Southern Poverty Law Center's President, Richard Cohen, comments, "Repeatedly in our country's history, economic troubles have created conditions that are ripe for demagogues and hatemongers to whip up public anger against minorities and recent immigrants." He cites examples from our country's history—of blame accorded to Jews during the farm crisis of the 1930s, to Irish Catholic immigrants for social ills during the 1830s, and to Chinese immigrants for the post-Civil War depression.

In the fall issue of the SPLC Report, published by the Southern Poverty Law Center in Birmingham, Alabama, Cohen points out that "people who are buffeted by global events beyond their control want to understand what has happened to them. Some will look for scapegoats in all the wrong places. And some will be seduced by the rhetoric of hate." Cohen notes that the number of hate groups operating in the United States has surged since the protracted debates over immigration reform. For example, "Hate crimes against Latinos are growing, especially in places like California." Despite the election of Obama and the "hope that we've turned a corner and that overt racism as a major force in our country will continue to fade into the dustbins of history," Cohen believes that the deep scars of racism—unequal opportunity, poverty, discrimination and more—will linger long after the bigotry that caused them has dissipated."

Cohen's thoughts and comments are relevant and important to keep in mind as we go forward into the new year. It is important at this time of hope and optimism to be aware of the ongoing bias and discrimination that affect individuals whose voices are not heard. We must work even harder to be allies for those who are in target groups around race, immigration status, religion, sexual orientation, class, and gender. In doing so, we will contribute to the well-being of our own community and to that of our country as a whole.

Sandy Thompson

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The campaign exposed deep hostility and even rage among some white Americans who cannot yet accept the idea of a black man as our nation's leader. And many white supremacists believe this election will rally white people to their cause, especially when our economy is teetering on the edge of an abyss. I hope and believe that they are wrong, that the growing number of Americans who cherish justice and tolerance will drown out the fear and bigotry that have held our country back for too long.

Richard Cohen, CEO and President
Southern Poverty Law Center

An Historic Moment (Reflections collected by Dotty Burstein)

It has happened! One hundred forty-three years after slavery was abolished, America has elected its first African-American president. In the aftermath of this historic moment, what does it all mean? For so many of us, the overwhelming sentiment is pride: pride in being an American, pride at having overcome the obstacle of skin color, pride that a day has come many never thought they would see. Realistically, we as a people have not reached the Promised Land that the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. alluded to in his final speech on that April evening 40 years ago. Nevertheless, we're engaged in the journey to get there. The good news is that President-elect Obama has caused us to feel the kind of hope that has long been absent—the kind of hope that will cause us to work tirelessly to transform this country into a land where everyone, regardless of race, class, sexual orientation, or religion, is fully included and respected. Only then will we have arrived in the Promised Land.

In the comments that follow, members of the Multicultural Network community reflect on the personal significance that this historic event holds for them.

From ANGELA GIUDICE, moderator for “Race and Place” and long-time consultant to the Network Board

What a true joy it is to share a worldwide sense of celebration and hope with so many others. As a white woman, I can only imagine how this triumph must pound in the hearts of African Americans, from across the ages. What I do know, firsthand, though, is how energizing and motivating this victory is for me and other white, anti-racist activists. Our legacy is not as well known. So, in solidarity, I add to the lists of Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Shirley Chisholm, and John Lewis, the names of John Brown, Mary White Ovington, Lillian Smith, and Ann Braden. My personal commitment is to be one of the ‘we’ in yes WE can. I honor this commitment by continuing to reach out and organize other white folks so that together we will learn what it will mean to advocate for and support the leadership of a black man, in authentic and profound ways.

From ANNA BUXTON, member of International Connections

Very happy about the election! My family in Italy and Canada is also celebrating Obama's victory. What a great moment for America.

From DOUG CROMWELL, Multicultural Network Community Advisor

I truly never thought I would see the day when a Black American male would be our President. I believed it would have been a woman first. It got me to thinking about my days as a student activist when civil rights, women's rights, human rights, and ecology were being vigorously fought for and in some instances died for. His election has made me believe in a United States of America that once had some measure of moral authority as well as economic and military authority. Though the framers of our Constitution may not have had slaves in mind when they talked of “all men are created equal,” I believe their intent was that whoever was in the U.S. and is a citizen, they were entitled

to the rights, protections, and freedoms that the Constitution gives. To know that my children are a part of this fills me with even greater joy and hope for our country, for my children (and their children), and our planet.

From ALLAN RODGERS, Multicultural Network Community Advisor

Those interested in civil rights were exhilarated that an African American gained the Presidency with an Electoral College win that was not in doubt during election day. But given the deep unpopularity of the Bush administration and the collapse of the economy, his victory of 6% in the popular vote was alarmingly low. So the test over the next few years will be whether elected officials and the electorate will continue to be inspired enough by his leadership that we can make the major changes that are needed to turn this country around.

From MARCIA RUSSELL, Board member of Multicultural Network

Today is Election Day in America. At this moment I am of the opinion there has been a concerted racial profile change among the majority of Americans. People are beginning to look deeper than skin tones to truly assess who is the right candidate. Obama, first and last, is President of all the people. His biggest challenge is to bring the nation back in some sort of balance and harmony.

From MARVIN WILLIAMSON, former Board member of Multicultural Network

As a new father, President-elect Barack Obama's victory represents an ancestral gift from those who faced adversity throughout their lives and fought for civil rights because of the color of their skin. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “Some day our children will be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” For me, the reality of electing the first black president of the United States means his words have rung true. Change has finally come for America.



Share your email address!

Please give us your email address. We will not share it with anyone else and we will not flood your mailbox. We use *Constant Contact* to let friends of the Network know about upcoming events and we need your help. Just email office@wmcn.org with your address and we'll keep you informed, save paper, and ensure that you know about Multicultural Network activities and events.

Thanks!

Race and Faith: An exploration of “whiteness” in the community of faith

January 5, 12, and 26 from 7:00–8:30 p.m.
Griffin Museum of Photography, 67 Shore Road
Facilitator: Rev. Eric M. Dupee

“People who imagine that history flatters them (as it does, indeed, since they wrote it) are impaled on their history like a butterfly on a pin and become incapable of seeing or changing themselves, or the world. This is the place in which it seems to me, most white Americans find themselves. Impaled...they do not know how to release themselves from [history], and they suffer enormously from the resulting personal incoherence.”

James Baldwin, 1965

America has elected its first black president, but the wounds of racism are far from healed. It is my dream to see communities of faith leading the way in dismantling racism, yet eleven o'clock on Sunday morning may still be the most segregated hour in America. In this three-part experience, we will explore “whiteness,” its origin as a category, the ways it undermines community and liberating ways to be in community together. Participants will be able to identify white privilege, recognize its destructive power in the community and adopt behaviors to resist it.

This will be of particular interest to religious communities; however, it is open to anyone interested in personal transformation and social justice. For planning purposes, please contact Crawford Church if you plan to attend at office@crawfordumc.org

Rev. Dupee has facilitated anti-racism events in numerous churches.

Recommended Multicultural Films

by Mindy Arbo

Email filmophile@comcast.net for more suggestions or to add your own.

These films are available through the Winchester Public Library and its Minuteman Library Inter-library Loans, and/or Video Horizons. Ratings are provided when they exist.

Rendition

Reese Witherspoon and Jake Gyllenhaal in a terrific examination of terrorism—its roots, perpetrators and victims and the moral dilemmas of those fighting it. The film's parallel story lines involve an Egyptian American professor who is abducted abroad and interrogated as a suspected terrorist; the American CIA witness who becomes increasingly alarmed by the torture, and the determined American wife who goes up against the political morass in Washington. Perhaps most enlightening is the depiction of the world of the North African police captain who heads the interrogation. We come to fully understand and feel the climate in which he struggles, the farming of young terrorists, and the personal stories of the lives destroyed.

Passage to India

A complex multi-layered picture of English colonialists in 1920 India. More than a beautiful costume drama, the film explores interpersonal intimacy, trust, betrayal, and loyalty, and toys with the nature of memory and reality as a female English visitor accuses an educated Brahmin of misconduct.

Away From Her

Julie Christie astounds us as a beautiful and loving rural Canadian whose decline into Alzheimer's is depicted through the eyes of her devoted and long-time husband.

What's Eating Gilbert Grape

Johnny Depp and a young Leonardo DiCaprio give amazing performances in this quirky tale of an odd family and their (really) small town life in contemporary rural Iowa. Juliette Lewis is a glowing sprite as an accidental visitor who awakens Depp to the hope he needs. DiCaprio's performance as a joyful cognitively disabled younger brother is unforgettable.

Paris, Je T'Aime

Twenty talented International directors and their five-minute shorts about Paris and Love. As diverse as the contemporary world of film, these vignettes include the comical and dramatic, whimsical and thought-provoking. Artists often find that when outside time restrictions are put on them, their works reach a level of “the sublimely simple.” The best of these shorts achieve that; the others are interesting experiments.

Al Otro Lado **F**

Three stories take place in Mexico, Cuba, and Morocco. In each, a child is living away from and longing for a separated parent. Both sobering and touching, this is a fine family film.

Open Range **F**

History and culture of the Old West at a critical point when it begins to transition from wild and free to owned and controlled. Both realistic and romantic. Star performances from Kevin Costner, Robert Duvall, and Annette Bening .

The Queen **F**

A brilliant exposition of the private and public worlds of England's contemporary monarch, her family, and the complex relationship between her and “her people” after the death of Diana. Helen Mirren won a well-deserved Oscar for her role.

*Family-friendly films are noted with an **F**.*



BOOK REVIEWS

Race in American Life

(Reviews by Dotty Burstein)

According to many thinkers and historians, race has been the sharpest and deepest division in American life. In fact, Studs Terkel, the late great observer of human nature, described race as our "American obsession." Earlier, this obsession resulted in a racism characterized by angry mobs and lynchings. Today, racism is alive and well, albeit more subtle. Many of us dismiss as inconsequential our inclination to stereotype other racial or ethnic groups, to resist reaching out of our 'comfort zone' to embrace those whose skin color is different, or to participate in joke-telling that defames another people. These kinds of behaviors are destructive in their own way; they cause the climate of subtle racism and misinformation to persist. To dismiss them as unconscious or unimportant is to participate in racism. As we resolve to approach matters of race in more thoughtful and respectful ways, we may find it useful to consider the insights of several researchers and journalists whose work has appeared in the last decade or so.

The national bestseller *Lies My Teacher Told Me* by James W. Lowen is a good place to begin. Filled with "startling truths about the myths and misinformation of American history," this "delightful and unsettling" book contains an entire chapter on racism, a topic described as virtually "invisible" in conventional American textbooks. We learn, for example, that the first colony to legalize slavery was not Virginia but Massachusetts. We discover that the Ku Klux Klan openly

dominated the state government of Indiana for a time and it "proudly inducted President Warren G. Harding as a member in a White House ceremony." Presented in an intellectually appropriate way, the information in this book will provide the basis for stimulating dinner conversation between you and your school-age children.

White Lies: Race and the Myths of Whiteness by Maurice Berger has been described as a "fresh and startling book." In it, Berger juxtaposes the politics of race with vignettes of growing up white and Jewish among African-Americans and recent immigrants in a Lower East Side housing project. During Berger's coming-of-age in the 1960s, he "became a passionate observer of race matters" in his neighborhood as well as in the charged atmosphere of his own family environment. His father's liberal outlook toward race included adoration of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement he led. His mother, a dark-skinned Sephardic Jew, despised black people. The understandable tension they created for the young Maurice led him to write the following about his unstable father: "He loved black people who survived what seemed the same bigotry that was crippling him."

Douglas A. Blackmon, the Atlanta Bureau Chief of the *Wall Street Journal*, has written an important book about the slavery of black Americans between Reconstruction and World War II. Published this year,

Slavery by Another Name came to my attention when its author appeared on the PBS show, *Bill Moyers Journal*. In this exposé, Blackmon describes a "neoslavery system" in which legal loopholes were exploited and federal policies were applied to discourage prosecution of whites for holding African-American workers against their will. The system worked in the following way: Black people were arrested under laws that were passed specifically to target them. Their 'crime' may have been as nebulous as "malicious mischief." These detainees were charged with fines, ostensibly to pay the costs of their arrests. The 'Catch 22' is that the arrested had no way of paying these so-called debts and were therefore sold as forced laborers, working in coal mines, on farm plantations, in brickyards, and on railroads. According to Blackmon, the fate of thousands of other African-Americans was even more extreme; (they were) "simply seized by southern landowners and compelled into years of involuntary servitude." Even government officials participated in the system by leasing "falsely imprisoned blacks to small-town entrepreneurs, farmers, and dozens of corporations, including U.S. Steel" and looking the other way when the enslaved were beaten and tortured. On a personal note, I was stunned to discover this horribly sad account of enslaving and torturing African-Americans, even during the 20th century. It is important that this little-known crime be described in history books across America.