

## Multicultural Information Services: Collective Action

By: Clara M. Chu

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**\*\*\*Note: Figures may be missing from this format of the document**

Shared leadership and effective partnering were proposed by Sandra Balderrama, ALA Diversity Offices in the last issue of the *EMIE Bulletin* as a strategy to advance the work of diversity and libraries. In our continuing exploration on "Uniting Multicultural Voices in Libraries" I want to highlight the multicultural work that EMIERT and ALA are conducting, work that is collaborative in nature. At the Midwinter meeting, Chair-Elect J. B. Petty and I attended the Diversity Congress hosted by the ALA Council Committee on Minority Concerns and Cultural Diversity with facilitator Lou Wetherbee. It has set in motion a dialogue among the different ALA units and affiliates which have traditionally worked independently to address diversity and libraries, facilitated an exchange of information and identification of common concerns, and created a framework for collective planning continued exchange and potential collaboration to learn more about the Diversity Congress, see <http://www.ala.org/spectrum/ccmccd/congresshome.html>

Other events at the Midwinter Conference also represented collective action:

- Sarah Long's Presidential theme "Libraries Build Community" was cast as "Libraries Build International Communities" and a mini-conference was held to enable Latin American and U.S. librarians to begin to consider international collaborations and examine libraries building communities. Over 100 librarians from 12 Latin American countries participated in networking activities and programs. Luis Valdez, the keynote speaker of the Presidential Program, spoke about "Multicultural Arts in the Computer Age." The mini-conference served as a catalyst for dialogue which will be continued on the *Comunidad* discussion list (Contact: Michael Dowling, [mdowling@ala.org](mailto:mdowling@ala.org)).(Contact: Michael Dowling, [mdowling@ala.org](mailto:mdowling@ala.org)).
- A sunrise commemoration "Celebrating Equity and Empowerment: The Contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." celebrated the life of Dr. King and the work of libraries and librarians to ensure equity of information access. The ethnic caucuses, EMIERT, the Social Responsibilities Round Table, and the newly established Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table, all joined in a reading of Dr. King's words. Dr. E. J. Josey gave the keynote speech on equity of information access. The commemoration of Dr. King will now be an annual event.
- An EMIERT Strategic Planning Task Force was formed during the Midwinter Conference to evaluate EMIERT's function and effectiveness, and recommend strategic directions. The members include Tamiye Meehan (Chair), Pat Beilke, David Cohen, Jim McShane, Lynn Miller-Lachman, J. B. Petty, and myself. I invite EMIERT members to contribute to this process. Please contact Tamiye Meehan [tmeehan@nslsilus.org](mailto:tmeehan@nslsilus.org) with your input.

It is through collective action that equal access to information can be achieved. Professional library associations working to address diversity need to identify their intersectionality, in other words, their common interests and concerns. This intersectionality became apparent when EMIERT's Board discussed with which ALA unit we could share a booth at the ALA annual conference in Chicago. The obvious choices, with which we had not collaborated in the recent past, were the other two round tables supported by the Office for the Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS): the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual,

and Transgendered Round Table (GLBTRT). 30th EMIERT and GLBTRT were at one point task forces of SRRT. We share the common goals of supporting and promoting equity of information access to traditionally underserved populations, which are also the concerns of OLDS. This summer look for the joint EMIERT, GLBTRT, and SRRT booth, which will be next to the OLDS booth in the Exhibits area. We will also be cosponsoring a program with the PLA Services to Multicultural Populations Committee on "Technology and Multicultural Library Services: A Vision for the Future," Monday, July 10, 2000; 2:00-4:00 p.m. (Contact: Fred J. Gitner, [fgitner@queenslibrary.org](mailto:fgitner@queenslibrary.org))

In the spirit of the collective action and fulfilling President Sarah Long's theme "Libraries Build Community" I also encourage you to contact your local community organizations to build coalitions. There is much work remaining to be done, bridging the digital divide is just one example. Sandra Balderrama has inspired us to risk with others to do the meaning work of diversity. Personally, it is a matter of...

### Connectivity, Community, Coalition Building

Collective voices creating community;  
Breaking new ground for collaboration;  
Identifying the threads that bind us;  
Weaving strands of differences into a pattern of consensus;  
Incorporating whispers into the dialogue;  
Constructing a language of respect;  
Cultivating an identity of collective agents of change.  
Collective voices, a conduit for social justice,  
Fashioning a legacy of equality.