

# ◊ Classroom Spice ◊

Volume 2, Issue 2 Dr. Jeanne Mather, Editor

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Often K-12 teachers are willing to incorporate multicultural elements into their curriculum, but do not know where to start. There are several wonderful resource books which can help teachers get started. Many of the ideas will fit into "existing" curriculum just providing a new perspective.

*Teacher Talk: Multicultural Lesson Plans for the Elementary Classroom* by Deborah Eldridge is published by Allyn and Bacon (1998). This book is comprised of seven chapters, each written by a working classroom teacher. Each chapter addresses the questions "What can I do to integrate multicultural education into my classroom?" and "How do I begin to do it?" Written from a different teacher's perspective each chapter includes K-8 lesson plans with objectives, suggested time frames, materials, procedures, homework and/or assessment. Lesson activities cover quilts, knots, and journeys; alternative lessons for Halloween, Christmas, and Easter; Japan and its culture; meteorology, global warming, and deforestation; U. S. government; Mexican civilizations; and multicultural literary activities. Easy tear out pages make it particularly user friendly. ISBN 0-205-26762-9

*Multicultural Math: A Teacher Resource Book for Middle and Upper Grades* by Sharon Vogt is published by Frank Schaffer (1995). While

the emphasis is on math, many of the topics can easily be integrated into many other curriculum areas, e.g., art, music, history, and science. The activities would be a welcome addition to any middle or high school class. The background information is thorough and fascinating. The activities are well written and provoking. This is an intriguing book that any math teacher will love to pick up and read, but will also be enjoyed by students. ISBN 086734-804-6

Another book, *Multicultural Mathematics: Interdisciplinary Cooperative-Learning Activities*, by Claudia Zaslavsky is published by J. Weston Walch (1993). It has 58 activities with a focus on problem-solving and critical thinking. While it encourages cooperative learning, the lessons can easily be done individually, providing enrichment or supplemental practice. Each activity includes cultural, historical, and/or other necessary background information. The topics range from numeration and fractions to probability and statistics, to networks and map coloring. It

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It is sometimes hard to realize just how many February and March holidays there are in America. Some have connections with other countries and other times; some are very definitely our own. By the time you read this some of these may have past, but you can file the information for use when it rolls around next year.

February of course has Ground Hog Day, but why is February second celebrated?

This day is about halfway between the winter solstice in December and the vernal equinox in March, and about the time most groundhogs' biological clocks tell them it is time to end hibernation and get up. The legend goes back centuries to the early European Christians, but is most closely tied to the German tradition that if a "hedgehog" saw his shadow on Candlemas Day there would be six more weeks of winter. The Pennsylvania settlers, being of German ancestry, substituted groundhogs for hedgehogs and continued the tradition in

America. Note that groundhogs are also known as woodchucks!

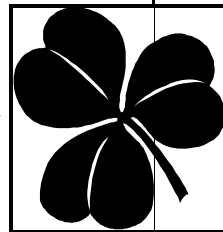
The Chinese New Year can fall anywhere from late January to mid February. Since the Chinese calendar is a blend of the Gregorian and lunar-solar calendar systems, with a year divided into twelve

months of thirty-nine and a half days the exact date of the New Year varies from year to year. Legend has it that the word meaning "year" was originally the name of a monster that preyed on people New Year's Eve. An old man then came

and tamed the beast, but told people to put up red decorations to scare away the beast in case it came sneaking back. Today most Chinese put up red decorations, use fireworks, buy and give presents, and feast. A great lesson plan on the Lunar Calendar is available on line at <http://ericir.syr.edu/Projects/CHCP/calendary.html>.

Valentine's Day is believed to have originated from the Roman feast of Lupercalia,

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Who was St. Patrick?

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# Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement

## DID YOU KNOW:

### What was so unusual about Martin Luther King, Jr. being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize?

Martin Luther King, Jr. was the youngest person to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize

### At what age did Martin Luther King, Jr. enter college?

After skipping ninth and twelfth grades, he was 15 when he entered Morehouse College.

### Who waged a six year campaign to harass and discredit Martin Luther King, Jr.?

After his death the Federal Bureau of Investigation admitted their six year campaign against Dr. King

Everyone has heard about Martin Luther King, Jr., world famous Civil Rights leader, but just how much do you really know about his life? This is a great conversation starter and research motivator. Take a few minutes and see how well you do. Information for these questions came primarily from the *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scavenger Hunt* on the net at <http://users.massed.net/~tstrong>, *Black Heritage: Brain Quest* printed by Workman, and *The Biographical Dictionary of Black Americans* by Rachel Kranz, Facts on File, ISBN 0-8160-2324-7 (Answers are provided on p. 4.)

	<u>Clue</u>	<u>Trivia?</u>	<u>Possible Answers</u>
1	What was the last state to adopt the Martin Luther King Holiday?		A. <i>Stride Toward Freedom</i>
2	Where MLK's "I have a Dream" speech was given		B. Alabama
3	The year Dr. King was assassinated		C. 15
4	Dr. King organized this civil-rights group		D. LBJ
5	This president signed the executive order integrating the armed forces.		E. Montgomery
6	The name of the last church he pastored		F. 1969
7	This Sheriff was a militant segregationist whose televised violent treatment of the nonviolent protestors outraged the nation		G. JFK
8	The year Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize		H. Mississippi
9	The state in which Dr. King was assassinated.		I. Washington, DC
10	The church he pastored was located here		J. 18
11	This amendment gave black "men" the right to vote		K. Tennessee
12	This was the first state to adopt the Martin Luther King holiday		M. Bull Connor
13	The bus boycott inspired by Rosa Parks and supported by MLK took place in this community		N. Faubus
14	Age at which MLK was ordained as a minister		O. <i>Why We Can't Wait</i>
15	This president signed the Civil Rights Act		P. Southern Christian Leadership Conf
			Q. New Hampshire
			R. Eisenhower
			S. Illinois
			T. Ebenezer Baptist Church
			U. 1968
			V. Selma
			W. Georgia
			X. Dexter Ave. Baptist Church
			Y. 1964
			Z. Truman

## The Literature Connection

(Multicultural Resources—cont'd from page 1)

is appropriate for 6th grade +. ISBN 0-8251-2181-7

Also published by Walch (1995) is *Multicultural Science and Math Connections: Middle School Projects and Activities*, by Beatrice Lumpkin and Dorothy Strong. It is divided into two parts, the first focuses on cultures underrepresented in the traditional math/science curriculums, while the second features ten outstanding scientists and mathematicians from various cultures and ethnic groups. While it is a hands-on science/math text, the history included is spellbinding and includes critical thinking questions. Every time you pick up the book you will be amazed by some tidbit of historical, scientific, and/or mathematical information. Easily adaptable for the high school class. ISBN 0-8251-2659-2

*Teaching Science in a Multicultural World*, by Dr. Elizabeth Offutt is published by Fearon Teacher Aids (1996). It is an elementary science resource book for K-4 and ESL. She has integrated the scientific processes with the full spectrum of Bloom's taxonomy in the teaching of hands-on science concepts through literature. Topics include earth, oceans, weather, mammals, insects, plants, light, and sound. Throughout the book the author also has "ethno science facts," wonderful tidbits of information dealing with the scientific achievements of different cultures. ISBN 0-86653-866-6

*Multicultural Music: Lyrics to Familiar Melodies and Native Songs* by Connie Walters is published by T.S. Denison (1995). It is an elementary resource book dealing with music from Africa, Australia, Canada, France, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, and Poland. Besides teaching native songs from each culture, it uses familiar children's songs to teach facts about the various countries. It includes activities, patterns, recipes, word lists, and related literature. Easily used by the self-contained classroom teacher or music

**NOTE:** All books referred to in this issue are available through the USAO Multicultural Resource Center or Dr. Mather.

With Elian Gonzalez in the news recently perhaps it would be appropriate to identify some books which deal with the immigration issue (both legal and illegal immigration). Literature is a powerful means to approach some controversial issues. Sometimes Americans do not appreciate what drives illegal immigrants to come to the United States. What could possibly drive someone to risk life and/or imprisonment? There are several books which deal with this issue.



*Jumping Off to Freedom* by Anilu Bernardo is published by Pinata Books (1996) and deals with the trials and dangers encountered by a boy who flees the dictatorship of Cuba. A great adventure story, with psychological insights. ISBN 1-55885-088-0. Appropriate for middle school and up.

*Journey of the Sparrows* by Fran Leeper Buss was reviewed in the March 1998 *Classroom Spice*. It gives an up-close, personal view of the ordeals of children coming to America illegally and

without parents. It also describes the monumental problems of being an illegal alien in the United States. ISBN 0-44-40785-0. 5th grade and up. A truly inspiring book.

*The Crossing* by Gary Paulsen, is a young adult book set in Juarez, Mexico. Manny is an orphan who risks his life to cross the Rio Grande in search of a better life. Read about the tragic life he is hoping to leave. Spellbinding book. ISBN 0-440-20582-4.

*Lupita Manana* by Patricia Beatty is published by Beech Tree (1981). It is a story about a thirteen year old Mexican girl whose father dies and the ramifications on her family. The death forces a dangerous attempt to cross the border in a hopes of being able to earn enough money to support the family. ISBN 0-688-11497-0.

*Children of the River* by Linda Crew is published by Dell (1989). It tells of the flight of a young girl and her family from Cambodia to America. It tells of the horrors of war and flight, and the problems of being accepted by a new country. A very touching young adult book. ISBN 0-440-21022-4

*Shadow of the Dragon* is by Sherry Garland, published by Harcourt Brace (1993). It tells of teenager Sang Le's attempts at assimilation into American culture after liv-

(Continued on page 4)

## An Oklahoman Who Changed American History

"Before" *Brown vs. Topeka* there was a young woman from Chickasha, Oklahoma who made a difference. The Smithsonian has identified Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher as one of 150 black women who have had an impact on American History—she broke the color barrier in higher education. As a young girl from a small town who would guess that her passion for Perry Mason books, her love of debate, the visit from lawyer Thurgood Marshall to her school in seventh grade, her concern for others, and her love of challenges would some day take her to the Supreme Court? In 1946 she was selected from a group of black students wanting to go to law school to challenge the segregation laws as they pertained to the University of Oklahoma's

Law School. It took over two and a half years but Ada was finally accepted into OU's Law school. When she eventually entered the school she had to face roped, chained, and marked off sections of classes and buildings to be used by "colored" only. But students became her friends and justice prevailed. In 1951 she gained her law degree and ultimately became a lawyer, college professor, and in 1992 a University of Oklahoma Board of Regents. For more information on the fascinating life of this "tenacious" woman who gave thousands a chance at an education, see *Courage: The Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Story* a video produced by USAO, or read her autobiography: *A Matter of Black and White: The Autobiography of Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher*.



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**n his ssue...**

Winter Celebrations; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher; Multicultural Resources

*(Winter—Cont'd from page 1)*  
actually celebrated on February 14th. It was a spring celebration involving young people drawing names of their next year's sweetheart. It is believed that the day was later named after a priest Valentine who secretly married soldiers and their sweethearts in defiance of the Emperor's decree that soldiers should not marry. The priest was beheaded on February 14th and later declared a saint.

Mardi Gras, which in French means "Fat Tuesday," and this year starts on March 7th, originated in the middle of the second century in Rome. It was a carnival "before" the Lenten period which started on Ash Wednesday. It is believed to be a carry over from the pagan festival of Saturnalia, and involves dancing, drinking, parades, and general madness.

Saint Patrick's day is another popular winter celebration. It is an Irish holiday honoring a real life missionary who is said to have converted the Irish to Christianity. St. Patrick was actually born in Scotland but was kidnapped at 16, and sold as a slave in Ireland. Eventually he escaped, went back to Scotland and after some time became a bishop. At that point he returned to Ireland to preach. While the Shamrock, which symbolizes the cross and the blessed trinity, is said to have been used by St. Patrick when preaching to demonstrate the Trinity, the legend commonly associated with St. Patrick driving the snakes out cannot be proven.

**Trivia**—The potato is not native to Ireland! 70 million people worldwide claim Irish ancestry, including 40% of U.S. Presidents! Aren't winter celebrations interesting?

*(Literature—Continued from page 3)*  
ing in a re-education camp in Vietnam, and compares his experiences with his cousin who also immigrated to America but at a younger age. The story also confronts racism and white supremacists. Thought-provoking young adult text. ISBN 0-15-273532-1

Perhaps the International Reading Association Award winning book *Letters from Rifka*, by Karen Hesse and published by Trumpet (1992) is what you are looking for. It tells of immigration from a more historical perspective. It tells of the story of Russian immigrants during the years surrounding World War I. It follows the family from Russia through Poland and Belgium and ultimately to New York. Reading/interest level is middle school and up. ISBN 0-440-83050-8.

*Gaicho* by Gloria Gonzalez

is published by Bullseye (1977). It develops the story of a Puerto Rican boy who moved to New York and finds he wants to go back. But the situation does not lend itself to Gaicho going back. Gang life also shows its ugly side. Is America all that its cracked up to be? ISBN 0-679-83932-1.

A lower level book on immigrants by Joan Hewett which is good reading is *Hector Lives in the United States Now: The Story of a Mexican-American Child*. The photographs by Richard Hewett follow the text to document the day-to-day life of a young Mexican boy. ISBN 0-397-32295-X

**Answers to Quiz**

- |       |        |        |
|-------|--------|--------|
| 1 - Q | 6 - T  | 11 - C |
| 2 - I | 7 - M  | 12 - S |
| 3 - U | 8 - Y  | 13 - E |
| 4 - P | 9 - K  | 14 - J |
| 5 - Z | 10 - W | 15 - D |