

# MULTICULTURAL NEWS

## Director's Column

### On Breaking Eggshells

A student of mine has just left my office and, moreover, has left me holding a fresh bouquet of thoughts for this column. She spoke passionately about the need for "breaking eggshells" over issues of race and ethnicity. But, first let's back up a few steps. Actually, she began by lamenting how "all of us on campus seem to be walking on eggshells" that is, often being afraid to say, "what we *really* feel" Why? "Because someone, somewhere, *might* get upset or even be insulted." In her case, this observation was prompted by an upcoming performance she's giving in class of Luis Valdez's early act, "Los Vendidos" (or "The Sellouts"). This act is a brilliant piece of satire. It succeeds in providing both hilarity as well as profound assaults on racial stereotypes used against Latinos.

So what's the problem? Well, in order to *dispel* these stereotypes Luis effectively projects them onstage. Her concern is that the audience simply won't laugh, not because the scene isn't funny, but because the audience has been taught and conditioned to "walk on eggshells." In short, students fear that their laughter would be seen as "insensitive" or possibly as a "racist response", or even worse, that Mariana (Latina herself) might be *personally* insulted. What, then, is my student's solution? (Here's a hint, it's a really cool one). Well, before the scene even begins, Mariana will literally give the audience permission to laugh. Yes, she will, in fact, *invite them* to "break eggshells."

And herein lies the serious point; we have forgotten not only how to laugh, but also how to express our true feelings, with honesty, passion, and yes, of course, with *compassion*. But, look, if the "real you" and the "real me" are always hiding out *behind* the eggshells of "political correctness",

or secretly lurking *behind* the pose of "courteous" (but inauthentic) language, then our hearts will surely stay "apart." Let's not fool ourselves into thinking that by avoiding all "conflict" we somehow are getting closer together. At the same time Dr. King reminds us that, "Our objective is not the *creation* of tensions, but the *surfacing* of tensions already present." So, by "breaking eggshells" we can actually see *inside* of another person's point of view. Dr. King continues, "The basic tension is not between *races* - the tension is between justice and injustice." So, I really need you to tell me the truth of your experience. We forget that "anger", itself, is not the root issue, "anger", however, does tell me what I need to *learn* from you - that you feel violated in some way, or unseen, or erased, or disposed of, or deeply bewildered and frustrated, etc.

As Brother Minister Malcolm X told us in 1964 (and which the media and our current textbooks *still* ignore) we have the key to solve our "so-called" race relations: "The only way the problem can be solved - First, the White man and the Black man have to be able to sit down at the same table. The White man has to *feel free* to speak his mind without hurting the feelings of that negro. And the so-called negro has to *feel free* to speak his mind without hurting the feelings of the White man. Then they can bring the issues that are under the rug out on top of the table and take an intelligent approach to get the problem solved."

For us, in 2002, we would simply multiply the diversity of the participants in Malcolm's illustration (beyond just Black and White.) But the point remains; that to sit "at the same table" means we share equal human worth, and that we are fully capable to speak out on our own behalf. And we must all "feel free" to speak our truth without self censoring or holding back (for fear of "hurting the feelings")

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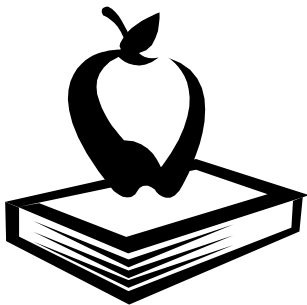


## Book Reviews

All items reviewed are available to be checked out from the Multicultural Center Library.



*“Racism teaches hard lessons, but this book will help you laugh while you learn.”*



**America’s Religions: An Educator’s Guide to Beliefs and Practices.** By Benjamin J. Hubbard, John T. Hatfield and James A. Santucci. Teacher Ideas Press, A Division of Libraries Unlimited, Inc., (Englewood, Colorado, 1997)

Classrooms of today reflect an increasing diversity in the United States. While teachers strive to meet their student’s academic needs, they are failing to gain an understanding of student’s cultural and religious beliefs and practices. This book is designed to be a teacher’s dictionary of religion and culture. This book provides clear definitions of the many different cultures, religions, and branches of religions that teachers may encounter in their classrooms. Teachers can use this book to familiarize themselves with such diverse religious beliefs and practices and, hopefully, avoid conflict with their students and their families. There are fourteen religions covered in America’s Religions with eight sub-topics describing each religion. These eight topics include: origins, beliefs, sacred books/scriptures, practices, main subgroups, common misunderstandings and stereotypes, classroom concerns, and population data. We highly recommend this book for all teachers.

**Intergroup Relations in the United States: Seven Promising Practices.** The National Conference for Community and Justice. Haddon Craftsmen, Inc., Bloomsburg, PA. 1999.

This book is the third in a series of publications on inter-group relations. This book takes a look at programs across the country that seek to foster multi-racial, multi-faith, or multi-ethnic collaboration through a variety of approaches.

These programs were selected based on their models and methodologies, which embody many of the principles the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), consider to be promising practices. This book examines seven specific programs: (1) The Blackfoot Youth Initiative-a Montana-based program

that connects young people on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation to a national network of peers to promote cross-cultural understanding between Native Americans and non-Native Americans.

(2) The Dismantling Racism Institute-a six-day, residential, anti-oppression program focusing on white privilege and internalized oppression. Sponsored by the National Conference for Community and Justice- St. Louis region.

(3) The FAITHS Initiative-an interfaith, multiracial collaboration among congregations, non-profits, and community organizers that involves people in economic justice activities in San Francisco.

(4) The Global Action Project-a New York-based youth program that uses media as an approach to improving inter-group relations.

(5) Hope in the Cities-an organization based in Richmond, VA, that promotes faith-based community dialogue groups focusing on personal responsibility and racial reconciliation.

(6) Leadership Development in Inter-Ethnic Relations-A Los Angeles-based program that fosters racial and cultural awareness among community leaders as well as hands-on experience with multiracial collaborations.

(7) The Multicultural Youth Project-a collaborative project in the Uptown-Edgewater neighborhoods of Chicago that creates opportunities for refugee and established resident youths of different racial and ethnic backgrounds to play and work together.

The goal of this book is to provide the reader with examples of the many ways to address issues of bias, bigotry, and racism. Each of these projects faced challenges and weaknesses, which are mentioned in order to provide the reader with helpful tips for those who may be interested in engaging in similar type of work.

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**\*Associated Students Senator-at-large for multicultural affairs is Brian Roberts.** Contact him at (562) 985-6170 or email at [brob007@hotmail.com](mailto:brob007@hotmail.com)

## Calendar of Community Events



**Place:** Skirball Cultural Center  
2701 N. Sepulveda, Los Angeles, CA  
"Visions & Values: Jewish Life from Antiquity to America." Traces experiences & accomplishments over last 4,000 years. Runs indefinitely. \*\*\*\*\*Free\*\*\*\*\*  
(310) 440-4500 [www.skirball.org](http://www.skirball.org)

**Place:** San Diego Museum of Art  
El Prado, San Diego (619) 232-7931  
Cost: Students \$6.00 Adults \$8.00  
Tue-Wed & Fri-Sun 10-6, Thur. 10-9  
"Axis Mexico: Common Objects and Cosmopolitan Actions." Ends 3/9/03  
"Shiva, Destroyer of Time." Ends 1/3/03

**Place:** Museum of Latin American Art  
628 Alamitos Ave., Long Beach  
(562) 437-1689  
"Latin American Artists: A Contemporary Journey." More than 180 works by artist who have lived & worked in Latin American since WWII. Through 3/9/03  
Tues.-Sat. 11:30 - 7:30; Sun. 12-6, Fri.-Free  
Cost: Students \$3.00 Adults \$5.00  
More information: [www.molaa.com](http://www.molaa.com)

**Place:** UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History  
405 Hilgard Avenue, Westwood, CA  
(310) 825-4361 Thurs: 12-8 \*\*Free\*\*  
Cost: \$5.00 adults, \$3.00 Srs. and Non-UCLA students. Wed-Sun: 12-5;  
"Katsina/Kachina" ends 2/16/03

**Place:** Bowers Museum of Cultural Art  
2002 N. Main Street, Santa Ana, CA  
(714) 567-3600 Tues-Sun. 10-4 \$5.00  
"Symbols of Power: Masterpieces from the Nanjing Museum" 5,000 year of artifacts from China's premier museums.  
\*Various cultural exhibits

**Place:** Japanese American National Museum  
369 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Los Angeles, CA  
(213) 625-0414 Tue-Wed 10-5, Thurs. 10-8; Fri-Sun. 10-5

**Place:** Southwest Museum  
234 Museum Dr., Los Angeles, CA  
"Pikuni Blackfoot: Good Things to Say"  
Through 1/12/03 Tues-Sun. 10-5

## FACTS THAT FOCUS

### Things YOU Can Do to Fight Hate:

The majority of Muslims are not Arab. Islam therefore, is not an "Arab" religion, but rather a world religion. There are 7 million Muslims in the U.S. making Islam is our fastest growing religion. Confusion exists between the terms "Muslim" and "Arab". They are not synonymous; the former is religious, the latter linguistic and cultural. There are approximately 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide (of which approximately one fifth live in the Middle East and speak Arabic) therefore 1 in 5 people on earth are Muslim! Currently there are more mosques in California than anywhere else in the U.S. The country with the largest population of Muslims is Indonesia. The country with the second largest Muslim population is India. **THE WORD "ISLAM" COMES FROM AN ARABIC ROOT WHICH MEANS "PEACE" "RECONCILIATION" AND "SUBMISSION" (TO GOD'S WILL) "Hira-bah"** In Islamic law, terrorism (hira-bah) is considered cowardly, predatory and a grand sin punishable by death. Classical Islamic law also explicitly prohibits the taking or seizing of hostages or diplomats (even in retaliation against unlawful acts by the enemy). "Jihad" A moral and spiritual struggle. "Let here be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error." (Sura 2, Ayat 256)

**ACT-** Do something. In the face of hatred apathy will be interpreted as acceptance.

**UNITE-** Organize a group of allies from churches, schools, clubs and other civic sources. Create a diverse coalition.

**SUPPORT THE VICTIMS-** Let them know you care.

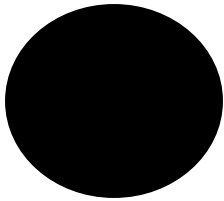
**DIG DEEPER-** Look further into issues that divide us. Work against discrimination in employment and education.

**SPEAK UP-** Hate must be exposed and denounced.

**LOBBY YOUR LEADERS-** Persuade politicians, business and community leaders to take a stand against hate.

**LOOK LONG RANGE-** Create a "bias response" team. Hold annual events, such as a culture fair or parade to celebrate your community's diversity and harmony.

**UNDERSTAND, APPRECIATE AND TEACH TOLERANCE-** Bias is learned early, usually at home, but children that are from different cultures can be influenced by school programs to open their minds.



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**We're on the Web!**

**See us at:**

<http://www.csulb.edu/centers/mcc>

**Director's Column (Continued)**

of those "sitting at the table"). But, let me also quickly clarify that "feeling free" to "speak out" does not imply, endorse, or condone some mean-spirited "free for all." True dialogue requires a "safe place" from which to speak; safety comes from trust, and trust comes from mutual respect. Furthermore, a "dialogue" is not a "debate", it is not an argument over who is "right" or "wrong." Dialogue is an opportunity to *listen*, to *learn*, to *feel* into another's hurts and hopes. Everyone gains greater compassion from such dialogues, and we usually discover that, in very significant ways, WE ALL SHARE in suffering and can begin to Share in Healing.

Thus, "Breaking eggshells" is necessary for creating what the Inter-Faith Community calls "Deep Dialogue." Not the predictable, easy, surface stuff that we play at (where no emotional risk is required and, therefore, no "conflict" is faced.) Rather the goal of Deep Dialogue is the transformation of conflict from that of hurtful outbursts into an investigated pathway leading us to the *source of the suffering*. I have faith that all of us can learn to better manage the tensions that Deep Dialogue's release. And I submit that Mariana's onto something; "breaking eggshells" in order to heal the inner wounds.

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Museum of Latin American Art**  
 628 Alamitos Ave. Long Beach, CA  
 (562) 437-1689 Cost: \$5 Students & Seniors,  
 under 11-Free

***Latin American Graphics: the Evolution of Identity From the Mythical to the Personal***-A survey of Latin American graphic arts from mid-century to present. Opens Sat. 11-16; Hours: T-Th: 11:30-7; Fri:11:30-9; Sat: 11-7; Sun: 11-6 Ends 2/03  
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**Los Angeles County Museum of Art**  
 5905 Wilshire Blvd. L.A. \$5 students  
 (323) 857-6000

***Miracles and Mischief: Noh and Kyogen Theater in Japan***-Comprehensive presentation of art from theatrical performances: masks, gold costumes, painted fans and hand scrolls, lacquered instruments. Ends Feb. 2, 2003  
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**STAR TRAINING**

**Students Talk About Race**

STAR provides a unique and positive experience for students by training them to serve as facilitators in cross-cultural communication. Our students then contribute to the local community by being placed in area middle and high schools. The Spring Training Date for STAR is Sunday, March 9, 2003 from 12:00 to 6:00. **Students must sign-up for the training. They can stop by the Center (F03-3) to sign-up or call (562) 985-8150.**

**About The Center...**

The Multicultural Center is a support program of Academic Affairs.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

In addition to meeting fully its obligations of nondiscrimination under federal and state law, CSULB is committed to creating a community in which a diverse population can live and work in an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the rights and sensibilities of each individual, without regard to economic status, ethnic background, political views, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics or beliefs. AN EEO/AA/TITLE IX EMPLOYER