

## NEWSLETTER



# apala

asian/pacific american librarians association

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Hopes for the New Year:

**H**au'oli Makahiki Hou! I don't know about you, but I've never been one for resolutions. Instead, I usually focus on a specific theme or value. This year, I chose "Mālama", which in Hawaiian means to care for, protect, and maintain — often with compassion and empathy. Mālama can be applied to almost anything — taking care of the land, taking care of each other, taking care of ourselves. The concept of mālama is essential when looking at what lies ahead for ourselves as library folks in terms of social justice work. On a daily basis, we care for and protect our communities. We provide our information and tools to create their ideal world. We support and care for each other through our peer to peer networks whether online or face to face. We maintain and advance a profession which holds the ideals of information access, equity, and diversity at the top of our values. We have the capacity for mālama in almost every aspect of our work, and many of us do so unconsciously because we love our profession and our communities. I hope for, and I know, that in 2017 we will continue the practice of mālama for our profession and for each other, and the busy year we have planned



and the busy year we had to show our commitment to action.

Soon, many of us will have the privilege of gathering in Atlanta to rejuvenate our passion for our professional work and make plans for the future. We will make our voices heard through attending meetings, speaking-up at forums, and marching as one in the birthplace of Martin Luther King, Jr. As we come together in Atlanta, our nation will transition to a new administration led by a president whose statements and recent actions represent values antithetical to ours. More than ever it is essential that we support one another —

*(continued on page 2)*

## APALA EXECUTIVE BOARD 2016-2017

### President

Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada

### Vice-President

Dora Ho

### Immediate Past-President

Janet H. Clarke

### Secretary

Anna Coats

### Treasurer

Peter Spyers-Duran

### Members-at-Large (2015-2017)

Ariana Hussain  
Brian Leaf

### Members-at-Large (2016-2018)

Alyssa Jocson Porter  
Ray Pun

### Executive Director

Buenaventura Basco

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mālama. We have created spaces to stand in solidarity with one another and connect as APALA members. A small preview: We begin our Midwinter Meeting on Friday in reflection with a field trip to the Center for Civil and Human Rights, followed by lunch and our evening Executive Board meeting, which is open to all. On Saturday, we will gather at the convention center to make signs about who we are and why we march, and then walk together back to the Center for Civil and Human Rights to participate in the Atlanta March for Social Justice & Women, one of many marches happening nationwide. To show solidarity among our ethnic affiliate associations, after marching, we will join together to hear about the third Joint Conference of Librarians of Color in September 2018 at the Site Announcement and Fundraiser event. This will provide an opportunity for us to unwind and meet with one another. On Sunday, we will close our formal activities with our Midwinter Membership meeting, highlighting some of the exciting things that have happened in APALA since we last met face to face in Orlando, and give an opportunity for our own committees and members to meet and organize with one another. I hope that if you are in Atlanta you will take the opportunity to join us and connect at one of our events.

As we look toward Midwinter and beyond, I'd like to take a moment to recognize that our members have been hard at work these last few months maintaining, growing, and improving our association. Since our new Executive Board and Committees took over in July, they have been hard at work creating opportunities for our members to engage and develop as leaders and professionals. Without knowing it, I think that the group of people we have working together on behalf of APALA have taken the concept of mālama to heart. We have individuals who really care and see the benefit of our organization and want others to see it too. A few of the highlights from the past few months include: our first webinar in December (with more to come); selecting our 2017 Emerging Leader, Ariana Santiago; renewing our partnership with Toyota Financial Services of the Talk Story program; and resuming our web publications. Our mentoring committee have made matches. Meet-ups were held in Northern and Southern California for those face to face interactions which are cornerstones of our association. Additionally, you can now see all of these events posted in events calendar where members could stay connected and involved. (<http://www.apalaweb.org/calendar/>).

If you don't already, we urge you to participate more in APALA in 2017. If you have an idea for a program, want to host a meet-up or a webinar, or have a suggestion, we want you to make your voice heard. Feel free to contact me or the appropriate committee chair at any time and be sure to fill out the Volunteer Form for 2017-2018 Committees. Vice President Dora Ho is looking forward to a busy, productive Presidency which will create even more professional development opportunities for our members. She needs your support as we all mālama each other and continue to grow our association.

I've said it once and I'll say it again — I am thankful for APALA and our members who continue to work in our communities with passion and conviction, keeping in mind the vision of an equitable, inclusive, and diverse profession and world. I invite everyone to practice mālama in 2017, and don't forget to also take care of yourself. We have a long road ahead, which we will travel all together, one step at a time.

Imua!

Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada  
APALA President 2016-2017

*A full list of events that APALA will be participating in can be found online at: <http://www.apalaweb.org/apala-at-ala-midwinter-2017-in-atlanta/>*

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## PICTURE THIS: REFLECTING DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLISHING

by Sarah Park Dahlen, Assistant Professor in the MLIS Program at St. Catherine University  
(sarahpark.com; @readingspark)

At the 2016 ALA Annual Conference, author Tameka Fryer Brown presented the Cooperative Children's Book Center's (CCBC) multicultural publishing statistics during the panel "Celebrating Diversity: The Brown Bookshelf Salutes Great Books for Kids." She displayed Tina Kügler's oft-cited 2012 infographic, with the comment that even though the numbers are now four years old, the image communicated inequity in publishing so well that she would use it at every opportunity.

Just before ALA Annual, I posted to Facebook asking if anyone knew of an updated illustration, but Kügler's was the only one anyone knew about. Friends said they would be

happy to support an illustrator to create an update. Author/teacher Molly Beth Griffin saw my post and queried her Twin Cities Picture Book Salon to see if anyone would be interested; David Huyck (pronounced "hike") responded, and a project was born. Over the course of several months, David, Molly, and I worked together to produce an illustration that communicates updated and more detailed CCBC data. Emails flew back and forth – Sarah sent David a few links (including Debbie Reese's storify of K.T. Horning's SLJ webinar), David dug deeper and sent back questions and sketches, Molly and Sarah offered feedback, and Sarah consulted K.T. Horning, Debbie Reese, Edith Campbell, and Ebony Elizabeth Thomas.

We created the infographic with a Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0 license so that anyone working toward equity in children's literature publishing may freely use it. We hope that this infographic, along with Lee & Low's Diversity Gap blog posts, Debbie Reese's blog American Indians in Children's Literature, Edith Campbell and Zetta Elliott's blogs, We Need Diverse Books, Reading While White, and

# Diversity in Children's Books 2015

Percentages of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds. Based on the 2015 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison: [ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp](http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp)



**0.9%**  
American  
Indians/  
First Nations

**2.4%**  
Latinx

**3.3%**  
Asian Pacifics/  
Asian Pacific  
Americans

**7.6%**  
African/  
African  
Americans

**12.5%\***  
Animals, Trucks, etc.

**73.3%\*\***  
White

Illustration by David Huyck, in consultation with Sarah Park Dahlen & Molly Beth Griffin  
Released under a Creative Commons BY-NC-SA license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

\* About a quarter of the total children's books published in 2015 were picture books, and about half of those depict non-human characters, like animals & trucks.

\*\* The remainder depict white characters.

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other diversity initiatives, can help push forward important conversations and lead to real change in children's literature publishing.

We are blown away by the response to our infographic. Many have long been advocating for diversity in children's literature; as we'd hoped, this infographic is pushing this work along. Since September 14, 2016, the blog post has had over 40,000 views; my initial tweet made over 21,000 impressions; my Facebook post was shared over 10,000 times, including by writers Cynthia Leitich Smith, Zetta Elliott, Mike Jung, Ellen Oh, and Junot Díaz. Professors, teachers, librarians, and students – from K-12 through graduate courses at universities and public libraries across the US and the world – are printing, sharing, displaying, and discussing the infographic.

Of course, with so much visibility came many questions.

Sarah Hannah Gómez pointed out the difference between the white category in the 2012 infographic, and ours, which uses data from 2015. She noted that it may cause folks to think we have made progress. But actually, David included the bunny to show that a significant percentage of children's literature depicts animals and inanimate objects (trucks, cupcakes, screws, etc.) as protagonists, something CCBC Director K.T. Horning wrote about in her 2013 blog post "I See White People." The 2012 infographic, created prior to Horning's 2013 post, does not reflect this, so the numbers are not exactly aligned.

Many people wondered about categorization. Where are South Asians? Why are Pacific Islanders included with Asians? Where are Jewish people? etc. Categorizing people (and books) into groups is difficult work. After some discussion, we decided to use pretty much the same category titles as the CCBC; you can read more on their

website about how they categorize.

The CCBC's data includes distinct categories for books by, and for books about, each of the demographics they count. The about category may, or may not, include a book in the by category (this happens when an Asian American writer, for example, writes a book that is not about Asian Americans.) For our infographic, we used only the about data. It is vitally important to note that this data does not reflect the quality, accuracy, etc. of the books themselves. It is also vitally important to note that the number of books about and written and illustrated by #OwnVoices authors is significantly lower.

Our hope is that people will continue to ask questions and do the work that will uncover more information. See Debbie Reese's post "A Close Look at CCBC's 2015 Data on Books By/About Americans Indians/First Nations" for one example of how a scholar unpacked the data, and Jerrold Connors' post "We Need Diverse Books, and How!" for some more graphs. As many have done with our infographic, read everything critically. Who is saying what? What is left unsaid? What more needs to be done? In short, we still have much work to do.

**Note 1:** Sarah Park Dahlen adapted this article from two blog posts she wrote about the infographic. You may read them in full here

<https://readingspark.wordpress.com/2016/09/14/picture-this-reflecting-diversity-in-childrens-book-publishing/> and here <https://readingspark.wordpress.com/2016/09/23/picture-this-follow-up/>)

**Note 2:** We created this infographic with a Creative Commons license so that anyone could download a PDF or JPG without asking first for permission.

## ARIANA SANTIAGO: APALA'S 2017 SELECTION FOR EMERGING LEADERS

The Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association's (APALA) Scholarships and Awards Committee is proud to announce Ariana Santiago as the 2017 Emerging Leader for the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association. APALA will provide funding to support her attendance and participation in the Emerging Leaders program at the 2017 ALA Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. The Emerging Leaders program is a leadership development program which enables newer library professionals to participate in work groups, network, and have an opportunity to serve the profession in

a leadership capacity.

Ariana is an Instruction Librarian at the University of Houston and is committed to making an impact on her campus and within the profession in the areas of instruction, outreach and diversity. She is the chair of her library's Campus Engagement Committee, which develops and coordinates programming to promote the UH Libraries on campus. Ariana is the vice-chair of the ACRL Instruction Section's Instruction for Diverse Populations Committee, which supports librarians in providing instructional services for diverse populations. She holds memberships in several organizations, including APALA, Reforma and LLAMA. She is the Outreach Director for ALA New Members Roundtable, 2016 – 2018. She was recently part of a panel titled, "Grow your community: An exploration of peer mentoring for people of color" at the National



*Ariana Santiago, APALA 2017 Emerging Leader*

Diversity in Libraries Conference. Ariana is contributing positively to librarianship and APALA is proud to be sponsoring her for the Emerging Leaders program.

## SAADA DIGITIZATION DAY

by Samip Mallick

In 2016, the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) hosted two Digitization Day events in Los Angeles. The first was in Little India, located in the City of Artesia, and the second in the Little Bangladesh section of Los Angeles' Koreatown. These events, made possible by a Common Heritage grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and with additional support from APALA, provided an opportunity for SAADA to explore ways to increase community participation in archiving. What was unexpected, however, was how the digitization process itself created a new sense of community.

Approximately twenty miles southeast of Downtown Los Angeles is the City of Artesia, home to the largest Indian American enclave in Southern California. Centered along Pioneer Boulevard, Artesia's Little India includes scores of restaurants, sari stores, jewelry shops, and other businesses. The Indian American presence in Artesia dates back more than forty years, when Balkishan Lahoti, a resident of a neighboring town, began selling Indian spices and foods out of a garage<sup>1</sup>. Although just more than one square mile in area, the city is now home to incredible cultural, religious,

<sup>1</sup> Visit The Pioneer Project: Histories of Artesia to learn more: [http://www.lahistoryarchive.org/resources/Pioneer\\_Project](http://www.lahistoryarchive.org/resources/Pioneer_Project)



*(continued on page 7)*

and linguistic diversity, with nearly half its residents born outside the US.

About five miles northwest lies a four-block stretch of Koreatown that, in 2010, Bangladeshi Americans successfully petitioned the City of Los Angeles to be designated as Little Bangladesh. The renaming was partly aspirational, as the area includes just as many Korean, Mexican, and Salvadoran businesses as Bangladeshi. Yet, it was also an important moment for local Bangladeshi Americans in staking their claim to the multicultural landscape.

Public libraries in these two neighborhoods were host to SAADA's Digitization Day events. In Little India, we were hosted by the Artesia Public Library (<http://www.colapublib.org/libraries/artesia/>), and in 'Little Bangladesh' by the Pio Pico – Koreatown Branch Library (<https://www.lapl.org/branches/pio-pico-koreatown>). The librarians at these institutions became important local partners in bringing local community members into the events.

The two events were structured similarly. As soon as the library opened in the morning, SAADA volunteers were on hand to set up our digitization equipment. We arrived with one large format flat-bed scanner, three legal size flat-bed scanners, and audio recording equipment to record stories for SAADA's First Days Project (<http://www.firstdaysproject.org>). The next four hours were dedicated to digitizing materials. We asked attendees to each sign up for a half-hour time slot when they planned to bring their materials in for digitizing. This ensured that there would be a consistent



flow of materials to digitize throughout the day and also that we wouldn't be overwhelmed by a glut of materials all at once. We did not place a limit on the amount of materials we would digitize. As a result, some participants brought in a single document and others brought in entire photo albums or boxes full of materials. We also did not require that the digitized items necessarily be made publicly available online. While the possibility of having their materials being added to SAADA's archive was the draw for some participants, others simply wanted their materials digitized for their own use. In the afternoon, following the digitizing portion of the day, we presented a talk about archives, SAADA, and South Asian American history.

What was truly exciting was the sense of community that was created through the digitization process, particularly at the event in Artesia. SAADA volunteers prompted participants to share stories about their family photographs and letters so we could later create descriptive metadata for these items. We were pleasantly surprised when those who arrived in the morning stayed for many hours. A sense of community grew as participants gathered around a table and shared stories and materials with each other.

The digital medium allows us to connect virtually with those thousands of miles away. But as someone who works on a digital-only archive, like SAADA, being able to sit down face-to-face with a community member and hear their stories is powerful in a different way. It is a reminder of the people whom the archive serves, those who should not be lost in the bits and bytes of the digital archive.



## LARRY ITLIONG DAY IN CARSON PROVIDES DIALOGS BETWEEN GENERATIONS AT THE CARSON LIBRARY

by Florante Peter Ibanez

On October 22, 2016, following a City of Carson morning community parade to honor and celebrate Larry Itliong Day, Carson area youth and a older generations of community activists and parents gathered to celebrate and talk about Filipino American history month to deepen their understanding of Filipino American history, especially the struggles and the role in the Great Delano Grape Strike that sparked the formation of the United Farm Workers.

The City of Carson goes on record as the first United States city to proclaim October 25 and celebrate Larry Itliong's birthday who was born in 1913. This action was prompted by the hard work of dedicated community leaders in 2010 spearheaded by Roselyn Estepa Ibanez with support from Councilman Elito Santarina and former mayor Jim Dear. She also accomplished a similar recognition for the County of Los Angeles.

The well-attended Carson Library event program included a youth martial arts demonstration by Garimot Arnis Training Los Angeles and featured a report back by local high school students who attended this summer's Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS) conference held in New York City. (See related article). They attributed their desire to pursue community involvement to meeting and exchanging ideas with other youth delegates from other cities including Anchorage, Alaska and Honolulu, Hawaii. They stated that the experience was fun, exciting and educational. They were so inspired that they have begun to plan fundraising events



Former Carson Mayor Jim Dear and Johnny Itliong (center), advocate son of Larry Itliong, join some local Carson youth, parents and community leaders Marcelino Ines Jr. (Kayumanggi Lions Club) and Dr. Ron Buenaventura (FANHS-LA) for Larry Itliong Day.



October 22, 2016 at the Carson Library celebrating Larry Itliong Day & Filipino American History month with Mango Cake donated by APALA.

in order to attend the next FANHS conference in Chicago in 2018. Following their dialogue with parents, community leaders and older activists, filmmaker and Emmy-award winner Marissa Aroy screened her documentary "Delano Manongs: Forgotten Heroes of the United Farm Workers"

After the screening special guest speaker, Johnny Itliong, told stories about his family life and recollected childhood memories of his father Larry and the contributions of all the manongs of his generation and of the Delano Grape Strike. Of note was his remarks regarding his father having more labor experience than Cesar Chavez. He also added that as a seasoned labor activist who could organize in nine different languages spoken by Filipinas/os he started working when he arrived in the US at the age of 15. Johnny also shared a number of stories that many have not heard. Larry Itliong was at the forefront of many labor organizing actions including as a co-founder of the Alaska Cannery Workers Union which later evolved to become today's ILWU Local 37, as well as a co-founder of Cannery Workers in the sardine industry in San Pedro. In 1933 he organized lettuce workers striking in Salinas. During World War II he served as a messman on a U.S. Army transport ship out of San Francisco. It was manong Larry working with Philip Vera Cruz, Ben Gines and Pete Velasco who initiated the 1965 Delano Grape Strike as the Filipino leadership of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) AFL-CIO. It took several days to convince Cesar Chavez leading his National Farm Workers Union to finally join the Strike on September 16, 1965 and as they say "the rest is history", but it is largely a partial history that lacks the contributions of those early Filipino workers and their leadership with Larry Itliong.

The Carson Library celebration was co-sponsored by the Filipino American Library, FANHS - LA, Kababayan Today TV Show, and Friends of the Carson Library, Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA), Filipinos in Carson and the South Bay Book, and Inquirer.Net.



# APALA @ ALAMW17

## WHEN

**January 20-24**

## WHERE

**Atlanta, Georgia**  
**The Georgia World Congress**  
**Center (GWCC)**

285 Andrew Young International Blvd NW Atlanta, GA 30313

## APALA@ALAMW17 CALENDAR

<http://www.apalaweb.org/calendar>

## REGISTER FOR FIELD TRIP

<http://apala.camp8.org/event-2394625>



asian/pacific american librarians association

## EVENTS



### FIELD TRIP

**CENTER FOR CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS MUSEUM**

**Friday, Jan. 20**

**9:45 a.m.**

**BYO Lunch after tour**

**HAVELI INDIAN CUISINE**

<http://www.haveliindiancuisineatlanta.com>

### EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

**Friday, Jan. 20**

**7:30 – 9:00 p.m.**

**Atlanta Marriott Marquis, L402**

### INFORMAL SOCIAL

**Friday, Jan. 20**

**After 9:00 p.m.**

**Atlanta Marriott Marquis, Pulse Bar**

### PROGRAM: SUPPORTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE CURRENT SOCIAL CLIMATE

**Saturday, Jan. 21**

**4:30 – 5:30 p.m.**

**GWCC, B405**

### JCLC FUNDRAISER & SOCIAL

*Event in lieu of APALA Midwinter Social*

**Saturday, Jan. 21**

**5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

**Omni Hotel at CNN Center,  
International Ballroom**

### MEMBERSHIP & ALL- COMMITTEE MEETING

**Sunday, Jan. 22**

**1:00 – 2:30 p.m.**

**GWCC, B308**

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## COMMITTEE NEWS

### Membership Committee

Membership Committee is brainstorming ways to engage members. #iamAPALA is one way for members to get to know one another at ALA Midwinter in Atlanta.

### Mentoring Committee

- Launched mentorship program for Fall 2016-Spring 2017 – new APALA members + seasoned ones got together in their communication preferences
- Updated APALA's calendar page, several APALA members will now have access to update APALA events in this Google Calendar for all to see about APALA activities
- Launched two webinars successfully: December 2016 and January 2017 – on Applying for IRDL program and on Publishing/Presenting Opportunities – extended invitations to CALA and REFORMA members too.

### Nominating Committee

- Election to be held March 22 - April 5, 2017.

### Scholarship and Awards Committee

Selection of Ariana Santiago as APALA's Emerging Leader

- Ariana is an Instruction Librarian at the University of Houston
- Ariana holds memberships in several organizations, including APALA, Reforma, ACRL and LLAMA and is the Outreach Director for ALA New Members Roundtable, 2016 – 2018
- She presented recently at the National Diversity in Libraries Conference with colleagues and the title of the panel was Grow your community: An exploration of peer mentoring for people of color.

Applications for the Travel Grant are due March 7 and the Scholarship applications are due April 4.

- Please encourage anyone interested to view the application and criteria on the APALA site: <http://www.apalaweb.org/awards/>

## MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to APALA members who recently started or accepted new jobs!

**Jaena Rae Cabrera** accepted a permanent adult services librarian position within the San Francisco Public Library system. Her title is Librarian I and she will be working in the Excelsior Branch.

**Chris Kyauk** accepted the Technology New Leader Award at the California Library Association Conference in November 2016.

**Anchalee (Joy) Panigabutra-Roberts** began a new job effective November 1, 2016 and would like to share her new contact information (below):

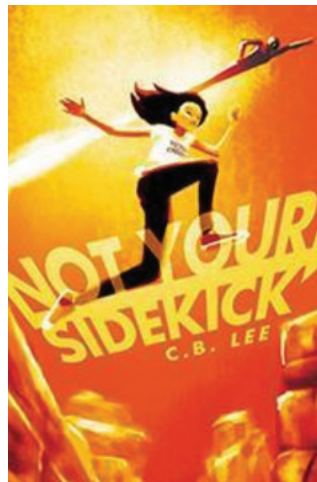
Anchalee (Joy) Panigabutra-Roberts  
Associate Professor  
Head of Cataloging and Metadata Services  
The University of Tennessee Libraries

307 John C. Hodges Library  
1015 Volunteer Blvd.  
Knoxville, TN 37996-0000  
USA

apanigab@utk.edu  
1-865-974-5952  
[www.lib.utk.edu](http://www.lib.utk.edu)

The International organization, Science Fiction Poetry Association, has named **Bryan Thao Worra** as its new president.

## BOOK REVIEWS



### “Not Your Sidekick”

by C.B. Lee, illustrated by C.B. Messer  
Sept. 2016, 294 p.,  
ISBN 978-1-945053-03-0

“Not Your Sidekick” is a book about superheroes in a slightly dystopian future, but unlike other YA novels about the same subjects, it's comedic, endearing, and pokes fun at some familiar tropes.

The protagonist is Jessica Tran, a second-generation Asian American teenager who's just learned that she hasn't inherited any of the superpowers that have made her parents famous in their small city in Nevada. Jess seems like an almost stereotypical Asian American character (the ones we're used to seeing in western media) — she's quiet, does her work, likes to organize things, “is utterly forgettable”, and is afraid of disappointing her parents, as opposed to her older sister,

*(continued on page 11)*

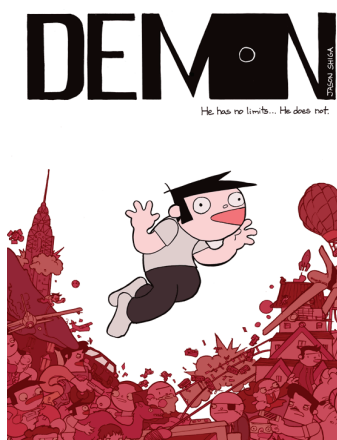
an up-and-coming superhero, and her younger brother, a genius who spends all of his time performing experiments in his room. In this future where superhero-ing affords one celebrity status and technology is much more advanced (but believably so), Jess's status as a normal, non-powered student who is trying to get into college makes her feel less-than; the high standards associated with Asian American families have been upped even more here. It's in the process of implementing her plan B (plan A was superhero training) that she lands an internship at Monroe Industries, with her crush, a beautiful, accomplished volleyball player named Abby. Coincidentally, Monroe Industries is run by Jess's parents' supervillain archenemies, the Mischiefs, and their assistant M.

There are certain plot points in this book that are predictable, but in the way that comic books are often predictable; what

happens later on more than makes up for it. The characters are the selling point here: C.B. Lee has created a diverse, memorable, and likeable cast of characters, from Jess, whose observant, sarcastic, down-to-earth perspective we experience the story through, to Abby, to Jess's best friends, Bells and Emma. Jess and Abby, in particular, are incredibly three-dimensional and believable teenagers, with ordinary teenage problems and worries.

There were a few parts that were somewhat sudden and convenient, and some of the Vietnamese phrases scattered throughout sound a bit forced and unnatural. Overall, though, "Not Your Sidekick" has the feel of a Pixar film, and is worth checking out for some satisfying, light-hearted sci-fi fun.

— Ammi Bui, MLIS candidate, University of Washington



**"Demon", Volume 1**  
by Jason Shiga  
Oct. 2016, 166 p.,  
ISBN: 978-1-62672-452-5

#### In Pursuit of Death

**Content note:** This review, and the work it is about, depicts a character in a suicidal state of mind.

Jimmy Yee wants to die—literally. But he fails at every turn; he makes

multiple suicide attempts to no avail, for after each attempt, he miraculously awakens the next morning in bed. Thus begins the opening chapter in the first volume of cartoonist Jason Shiga's "Demon". From the creator of children's plot twister "Meanwhile" and atypical romance "Empire State" comes a perplexing tale that resonates with intrigue, mystery, and dark humor.

"Demon" starts off in an isolated motel room in Oakland, California with Jimmy scribbling what appears to be a suicide note. From there, the story unravels methodically through four-to-six-page panel layouts, many of them lacking dialogue, yet steering readers effectively from one panel directly into the next. The second chapter provides context for Jimmy's suicide attempts by revealing Jimmy's backstory as the sole survivor of a horrible car accident. Tension escalates as he seeks to demystify his predicament, each chapter concluding with a cliffhanger that tantalizes readers to find out what happens next.

Drawn in Shiga's signature style of bulbous-shaped characters with bug-like eyes, the character designs intrigue and elicit sympathy in bizarre yet charming ways. Muted shades of beige, gray, tan, and orange create a deceptively calm atmosphere and tone, softening the dark and visceral scenes that strike at unexpected moments, as exemplified by the headless torso appearing on the book's front cover.

Previously published as an interactive web comic ([www.shigabooks.com](http://www.shigabooks.com)), "Demon" has now evolved into a page-turner of a graphic novel. In the style of Asian American graphic novelists Derek Kirk Kim, Adrian Tomine, and Gene Luen Yang, he situates Asian American characters in a contemporary setting where they must face moral dilemmas in unusual situations. Shiga crafts a wickedly compelling plot, infusing it with puzzling elements, dark humor, and morbid suspense. This marks the first volume of a four-part series for adult readers, one that will leave them hungering for future volumes to ascertain the final fate of Jimmy Yee.

— Jerry Dear, Information Strategist, San Francisco Public Library; Instructor, Library Information Technology, City College of San Francisco

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## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

APALA Communications & Media Committee's Publications team is always looking for submissions. Please send your articles, stories, letters to the editor and announcements to Newsletter Editor, Alyssa Jocson Porter at [alyssa.jocson.porter@gmail.com](mailto:alyssa.jocson.porter@gmail.com). Deadlines for submission are announced via the APALA list-serv.

Submissions to the APALA Newsletter may be made by any current APALA member or APALA affiliate. Please send your submissions electronically in one of the following formats: MS Word, Google Docs or plain text pasted into the body of an email. We ask that submissions be kept to a length of 500 - 1,000 words. Include a suggested title for your article. Graphics are encouraged. Please submit images as separate files along with a list of file names with corresponding captions. If using images that are already on the Internet, the URL of the image and a caption or description may be added to the text of the submission.

Submission for book reviews should be sent to Anastasia Chiu, [anastasia.chiu@temple.edu](mailto:anastasia.chiu@temple.edu).

Reviews should be 300 - 500 words. Any length much shorter or longer should be discussed with the reviews editor prior to submission. Reviewers should avoid conflicts of interest. Full disclosure should be made when appropriate.

## PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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## COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA COMMITTEE PUBLICATIONS TEAM 2016-2017

### Co-Chair

Melissa Cardenas-Dow  
[melissa.cardenasdow@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.cardenasdow@gmail.com)

### Co-Chair and Newsletter Editor

Alyssa Jocson Porter  
Seattle Central College  
[alyssa.jocson.porter@gmail.com](mailto:alyssa.jocson.porter@gmail.com)

### Layout Editor

Jaena Rae Cabrera  
San Francisco Public Library  
[jaenarae@gmail.com](mailto:jaenarae@gmail.com)

### Book Review Editor

Anastasia Chiu  
Temple University  
[anastasia.chiu@temple.edu](mailto:anastasia.chiu@temple.edu)

Gerardo "Gary" Colmenar  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
[colmenar@ucsb.edu](mailto:colmenar@ucsb.edu)

Molly Higgins  
[mollylh@uw.edu](mailto:mollylh@uw.edu)

Silvia Lew  
San Quentin State Prison  
[silvia.lew@gmail.com](mailto:silvia.lew@gmail.com)