

Classroom Spice

Volume 5, Issue 2 Dr. Jeanne Mather, Editor

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Who Makes Up Our Cabinet?

Can you name all members of the U.S. Cabinet? Probably not. These individuals help shape government policy and yet how much do you know about them? The cabinet is now made up of 15 departments, headed as follows:
 Sec. of Agriculture-Veneman
 Sec. of Commerce-Evans
 Sec. of Defense-Rumsfeld
 Sec. of Education-Paige
 Sec. of Energy -Abraham
 Sec. of Health & Human Services-Thompson
 Sec. of Homeland Security - Ridge
 Sec. of Housing & Urban Development-Martinez
 Sec. of Interior-Norton
 Attorney General Ashcroft
 Sec. of Labor-Chao
 Sec. of State-Powell
 Sec. of Transportation-Mineta
 Sec. of Treasury-Snow
 Sec. of Veterans Affairs - Principi

Due to space, this article will focus on the fact that this cabinet has the highest minority representation in history. Cabinet members of minority background include Chao, Martinez, Mineta, Paige, and Powell.

Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao is the first Asian-American woman appointed to a Presidential Cabinet. She has an undergraduate degree in economics and an MBA from Harvard Business School. Her background includes serving as Director of the Peace Corps, President and CEO of the

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America's Melting Pot

Is America really a melting pot? The idea of America being a melting pot is not unanimously supported. Opponents primarily object to the implication that individuals must lose their culture when thrown into the great American pot. Perhaps a better metaphor would be that America is a giant quilt. Each culture representing a quilt piece, significant in itself, and vital in its contribution to the beauty of the whole.

Quilts are a wonderfully versatile multicultural, historical, and mathematical teaching strategy. Quilting involves one or more of three processes: *patchwork* with scrap pieces sewn together in a pattern or design; *appliqué* with design pieces sewn onto the background fabric, and *quilting* which is the stitching which holds the top, batting, and back together and may itself involve a design.

There are numerous books dealing with quilting. They fall into one of two categories: books about the art of quilting

or integrating a quilt into the essence of a story. Quilts can be a means to tell historical events, or family history as shown in such books as Valerie Flournoy's *The Patchwork Quilt*, Eleanor Coerr's *The Josefina Story Quilt*, Faith Ringgold's *The Last Story Quilt*, or Patricia Polacco's

The Keeping Quilt. Did you know that quilts are rumored to have provided secret information to help slaves escape? Read Jacqueline Tobin and Rayond Dobard's *Hidden in Plain View:*

A secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad or Debora Hopkinson's *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*.

Whether you study about the AIDS quilt or the quilt that was made in memory of the Murrah Bombing, there is no question that it is a powerful means to draw attention to an event.

Quilts are also a means to show commonalities in cultures. Quilts or similar textile art forms exist in many cultures around

the world. For more information look at such books as: Ranya Batt's *The Fabrics of Fairy Tale: Stories Spun from Far and Wide*, Lois Ehlert's *Market Day*, Margaret Musgrove's *The Spider Weaver: A Legend of Kente Cloth*, Dia Cha's *Dia's Story Cloth: The Hmong People's Journey of Freedom*, Richard Ammon's *An Amish Year*, or Georgia Guback's *Luka's Quilt*.

As a teacher you can have your class study quilts for their historical value, for their sociological value, or for their cultural value. Perhaps you can study geography and tie it in with quilts using Adrienne Yorinks' *The Alphabet Atlas*. Maybe you can utilize the nine-patch square and have students dividing it into thirds, ninths, or fourths creating their own designs and determining how to combine their squares with others to make yet a larger pattern. Perhaps students can research the origins of the names, patterns, or people behind quilts, utilizing Ann Whitford Paul's *Eight Hands Round: A Patchwork Alphabet*. Quilts are a great way to let students piece together content and have fun.

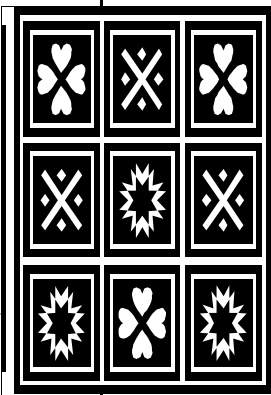


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Women s History Month

Fill in the last names of these famous women to solve the puzzle. A clue is provided for each name.

___ **W** _

Author of Uncle Tom’s Cabin

___ **O** _ _ _ _ _

First woman Supreme Court Judge

___ **M** _ _ _ _ _

Won a Nobel Literature Prize

___ **E** _ _ _ _

Artist known for paintings of the American Southwest

___ **N** _ _ _ _ _

Cherokee Leader

___ **S**

She refused to give up her seat on the bus

___ **H** _

First woman Secretary of State

___ **I** _ _

First woman in space

___ **S** _ _

Biologist and author of “The Silent Spring”

___ **T** _ _ _ _ _

Associated with helping thousands of slaves

___ **O** _ _ _ _

Biologist known for her work with chimps

___ **R** _

First female steamboat captain

___ **Y**

Talk show host

___ **M** _ _ _ _ _

Olympic Gold medalist

___ **O**

First Woman Vice Pres’l Candidate of a major party

___ **N** _ _ _ _ _

Writer, poet, dancer

___ **T** _ _

Author of the Joy Luck Club

___ **H** _ _ _

Aviator lost at sea

(Answers are on page 4.)

(Cabinet—cont'd from page 1)

United Way of America, and Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Dept. of Transportation.

Secretary of HUD Mel Martinez fled Cuba as a 16 year old boy. He graduated from Florida State with a law degree. His background includes local, and state government appointments, and service to his community.

Secretary Norman Mineta was the first Asian Pacific American to serve in the cabinet when he was Secretary of Commerce under President Clinton. His background includes living in an internment camp during World War II and serving as a U.S. intelligence officer in Japan and Korea.

Secretary of Education Rod Paige is African American. He grew up in Mississippi earning a doctorate from Indiana University. His background includes coaching college-level athletics and serving as Dean of College of Education at Texas Southern and later as superintendent of Houston Schools.

Secretary of State Colin Powell also is African American. Powell is one of the best-known cabinet members having served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during Operation Desert Storm. His parents immigrated to the U.S. from Jamaica, and he was raised in the South Bronx. Powell graduated with a degree in geology, and a Masters in Business Administration. He has received numerous awards including two Presidential Medals of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal.

While Dr. Condoleezza Rice is not a cabinet member, she is a powerful policy maker serving as the U. S. National Security Advisor. Dr. Rice too is African American. Her background includes serving as the Provost at Stanford, professor of political science, Senior Director of Soviet and East European Affairs for National Security Affairs, and Special Assistant to the Director of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Her honors include the Walter Gores Award for Excellence in Teaching .

The Cabinet truly shows diversity and minority success stories. Share these stories with others.



The Literature Connection

This issue's literature focus will correlate with May being Asian and Pacific Islander Month. My objective is to first introduce you to a few resource books which could be helpful to teachers, and then to some great children's literature.

Asian Holidays by Faith Winchester, ISBN 0-516-20285-5 is a beautiful book for third grade through middle school. It gives a brief discussion of the term Asian and then explains such holidays as Chinese New Year, Ch'ing Ming, Japanese New



Year, Buddha's Birthday, Tet, Doll Festival, Boy's Festival, and Harvest Moon Festival. It includes a pronunciation guide, and helpful addresses and internet

sites. It is really a fascinating little book that students will enjoy.

A great book for middle school and up is *16 Extraordinary Asian Americans* by Nancy Lobb, ISBN 0-8251-2858-7. It would be interesting to incorporate it into a unit on careers as it highlights exceptional individuals of Asian descent from U.S. Senator, to architect, to symphony conductor, to actor, to illustrator, to economist, to

sculptor, to athlete, to astronaut, and more. It has comprehension questions, vocabulary, and related activities. It includes material on Daniel Inouye, Maxine Hong Kingston, I.M. Pei, Lmaya Lin, An Wang, Haing Ngor, Seiji Ozawa, Kristi Yamaguchi, Noriuki "Pat" Morita, Yo-Yo Ma, David Ho, Wendy Lee Gramm, Ellison Onizuka, Carlos Bulosan, Jose Aruego, and Dustin Ngyen. It is great high interest reading material.

Hands-on Culture of Japan by Kate O'Halloran, ISBN 0-8251-3086-7, is a reproducible text designed to introduce Japan to middle school and older students through hands-on, interdisciplinary activities. It includes activities in geography, art, language arts, math, science, language arts, and social studies. A must for anyone who teaches about Japan or cultures.

Rebels of the Heavenly Kingdom by Katherine Paterson (author of *Jacob Have I Loved*), ISBN 0-14-037610-0, is a young adult historical fiction book set in China in the early 1850s. It weaves the story of two teenagers, both soldiers one of whom is a female soldier and spy, during the Taiping Rebellion. This book is an American Book-seller "Pick of the Lists," a Bank Street Children's Book of the Year, and an NCSS-CBC Notable Children's Trade Book.

(Continued on page 4)

The Ten Worst Ways to Make a School Parent Friendly

Research shows the importance of parental involvement and student achievement. It is important to make parents, all parents, feel welcome in a school. Having been a Navy brat, I can tell you my parents visited lots of schools and I'm sorry to say the following are still the rule and not the exception. If your school does any of these (based on the NEA TODAY cover story of September 2000), then you need to reevaluate your dedication to getting parents involved in your school.

1. During parent-teacher conferences, or open houses, you insist parents sit in tiny tot furniture.
2. Hold all meetings only during regular working hours.
3. Provide information that is either bor-

ing or overwhelming.

4. Lock the doors, turn off the lights, and refuse to answer the phone after 4 p.m.
5. When parents do show up for meetings, try and make them feel as out of place as possible.
6. Design a report card which reads like a legal document.
7. Never let teachers introduce themselves before October.
8. Instruct secretaries never to welcome parents when they come into the office.
9. Post welcoming signs at your doors and offices: "Violators are subject to a \$500 fine or 6 months in jail or both."
10. Make sure parents know you are much more intelligent than they can ever hope to be.



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Answers to Womens' Hx Month: Harriet Beecher Stowe; Sandra Day O'Connor, Toni Morrison, Georgia O'Keeffe, Wilma Mankiller, Rosa Parks, Madeline Albright, Sally Ride, Rachel Carson, Harriet Tubman, Jane Goodall, Capt. Blanche Leathers, Oprah Winfrey, Shannon Miller, Geraldine Ferraro, Maya Angelou, Amy Tan, Amelia Earhart

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U.S. Cabinet; American Melting Pot; Women's History Month; Literature Connections

Who was born in Russia, illegally immigrated to the United States and eventually became the Prime Minister of Israel?

Golda Meir! She migrated to the U.S. after watching her neighbors beaten and burned because they were Jews. Later she moved to Palestine. She fought for the freedom of Jews in Europe during WWII, raising over \$50,000,000 to help build Israel. After holding many government positions, the people of Israel begged her to become Prime Minister (this was at the age of 70). In 1973 a Gallup Poll named her among the most admired women in history. A far cry from her original desire to be a traditional homemaker.



(Literature—Cont'd from page 3)

A great book for middle school and up is *Under the Blood-Red Sun* by Grahman Salisbury, ISBN 0-440-41139-4. This book is about an eighth grade Hawaiian born boy whose family lineage is Japanese and how his world changes on December 7, 1941. A story about discrimination, growing up, and war. This winner of the Scott O'Dell Award is a must read.

Laurence Yep's *Dragonwings*, ISBN 0-06-440085-9, is a Newbery Honor Book. This young adult novel follows the story of eight year old Moon Shadow and his immigration to America. Set in San Francisco during the early 1900s, Moon Shadow lives with his father. The story reveals what it was like to be an immigrant, to endure poverty, separation from family, discrimination, and yet still dream. It was inspired by a

Chinese immigrant who did indeed make a flying machine. Wonderfully written, it touches the spirit.

Rosie's Tiger by Anna Myers (author of Red-Dirt Jessie), ISBN 0-8027-8305-8H, was also inspired by a true story. It is based in a small Oklahoma town in the 1950s and what happens to a family when a young serviceman returns from Korea with a wife and her young son. It includes family issues, racism, and drama. Its honors include the Oklahoma State Book Award 1993, Parents Choice Award: A 1992 Storybook Honor, and the Sequoyah Children's Book Award Masterlist, 1994-1995. This is a powerful book, well worth reading.

A great book to include for folktales is *Lao Lao of Dragon Mountain* by Margaret Bateson-Hill, ISBN 1-899883-64-9. This story centers around an

old woman who weaves stories while making beautiful paper cuts in response to an impossible task demanded of the greedy emperor. It includes many traditional themes from Chinese folktales emphasizing the value of simple pleasures. It also includes instructions and templates for simple paper cutting. Thus, it crosses language arts, social studies and art.

Angel Child, Dragon Child by Michele Maria Surat, ISBN 0-590-42271-5, is a Reading Rainbow Review Book and a Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies. Ut is a young Vietnamese girl who comes to America with part of her family. The story shows the difficulty she has being accepted in a new school, but how children can learn to be accepting and caring. It is designed for lower elementary, and is a simple story with a strong point.