

## SUSANews: The SIETAR-USA Newsletter

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Summer Issue

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### 1. Letter from the President

Greetings S-USA Members,

Parker Palmer writes in his essay “There is a Season”<sup>1</sup>

“Here is the summertime truth: Abundance is a communal act, the joint creation of an incredibly complex ecology in which each part functions on behalf of the whole and, in return, is sustained by the whole. Community not only creates abundance—community is abundance. If we could learn that equation from the world of nature, the human world might be transformed.”

This passage is provocative and causes me to think in many different ways, and certainly not in the least about our upcoming annual conference in Albuquerque, NM, November 2-4, 2006. We are putting the final touches to the conference program and it is certainly true that each part, each session functions on behalf of the whole, and we have a great program shaping up for you. The depth and breadth of the proposals submitted is exciting and I believe will bring forth great conversations and discussions in

keeping with the theme –Are we ahead of the curve or behind the times? We hope you plan to join us. Within this newsletter you will read more about our upcoming annual conference – it’s one you won’t want to miss! Join us for the conference and help us transform the world.

We invite you to also consider a position on the SIETAR-USA Board. Positions are opening and our call for nominations will go out later this summer. This is a wonderful group of volunteers who work with a passion and a commitment to advance intercultural relations. As a Board we meet twice annually at our spring working retreat, and at the annual conference. Much of our work is done virtually which allows us the flexibility to incorporate our personal and professional schedules along with our SIETAR-USA responsibilities. Many of the board members are developing committees to advance the work to which they are assigned. They are looking for people who might work with them. A list of all the committees will be sent as part of the Nominations announcement. Let us know if you are interested serving on the Board or as a member of a committee!

## UNITED NATIONS UPDATE

We thank you for your enthusiastic response to our call for SIETAR representatives to attend the 59<sup>th</sup> Department of Public Information annual conference for non-government organizations. This is one of the member benefits which allows five members to attend this annual meeting at the United Nations. The annual DPI/NGO conference brings together hundreds of NGOs from around the world to share, to learn, and to plan for future work. I was fortunate to attend in 2003 and was fascinated and humbled by the tremendous work done by NGOs around the globe. National SIETARs are focusing on ways to increase our efforts to work with other NGOs and strengthening intercultural competencies world wide. We are excited as SIETAR-USA will be represented by Karen Eng—our year-round SIETAR-USA NGO representative, Judee Blohm, Michael Moodian, Sally Normand McReynolds, Marilyn Rymniak, and Viviane Ephraimson-Abt. Be sure to read the UN report from Karen Eng later in this newsletter.

## SIETAR-GLOBAL CONGRESS 2008

Plans are developing for a Global Congress to include all national SIETARS for 2008. The idea is to host a Global Congress once every five years beginning in 2008. The conversation started at SIETAR-Europa last fall 2005 in Nice, France. This is an exciting development as national SIETAR groups are recognizing the value in getting together to share information, to network and to support interest in intercultural relations.

We have just received word that Granada, Spain will be the Congress site in 2008. Committees will be formed soon to manage and develop this Congress program and arrangements -- it's a great opportunity to meet new colleagues from around the world. Let us know if you are interested in this effort .

SIETAR-INDIA has formed under the able leadership of Heather Robinson, SIETAR-USA Immediate Past-president, who is the SIETAR-India liaison. Heather and her colleagues are to be commended for forming SIETAR-India in record time, and they are scheduled for their first conference on August 17-19, 2006 in Bangalore, IN. You may have seen their Call for Proposals in the recent S-USA NEWS announcement.

Esther Louie  
President, SIETAR USA

- 1 Loeb, P. R. 2004. The Impossible Will Take a Little While: A Citizen's Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear. pg 124

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## 2. Note from the Executive Director

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This is a particularly busy time of year for S-USA. We are in the process of finalizing all the arrangements and programs for the conference and, at the same time, managing the on-going operation of the Society. You will see from the message below that the conference in Albuquerque is going to be a particularly exciting and stimulating event. The web site for registration will be available at the end of July so look for an announcement on our web site and in S-USA News.

I would like to thank Sandy Fowler for her unceasing support of SIETAR USA. She has served as the newsletter editor for seven years, a task she volunteered as we were forming SIETAR USA and one she has continued to do until this issue (see her note at the end of this newsletter). She has also served as a senior advisor to, while being a member of, the board of directors. She was one of the original founding members of this Society and has taken on numerous tasks outside the editorial role she has played so well. Her infallible judgment and constant availability has been invaluable to me, as the founding president, and to every member of the board of directors. She has found a successor, Monica Francois Marcel, who is extremely talented and will serve ably in the role of newsletter editor. Sandy is not going away but hopes to expand the SIETAR USA virtual magazine, something she has tried to do but did not have to time to fully develop. Early issues of The Slate can be found on the web site; stay tuned for a new edition under a different name.

Peggy Pusch  
Executive Director, SIETAR USA

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### 3. Annual Conference: November 1-4, 2006

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The conference theme for 2006 is:  
“Interculturalists in the World: Ahead of the Curve or Behind the Times?”

The plans for our 7<sup>th</sup> annual conference are in full swing and the Conference Planning Committee is very much looking forward to welcoming you in November. The conference will take place at the Hilton Albuquerque Hotel situated on 14 acres of tree-lined landscape in the University/Midtown district of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The hotel is just a few minutes drive from the historic Old Town and 55 miles from Santa Fe. The hotel has a really fine swimming pool so don't forget to pack your bathing suit.

The town of Albuquerque itself, with its rich history, cultural diversity and delicious regional cuisine - not to mention the glorious sunsets reflecting off the nearby Sandia Mountains! – provides a wonderful backdrop for the exploration of our conference theme: “Interculturalists in the World: Ahead of the Curve or Behind the Times?”

The program includes an impressive variety of pre-conference Master Workshops, concurrent sessions, forums and distinguished keynote speakers. Due to popular demand we are also bringing back a number of poster sessions and a Fireside Chat.

Our keynote speakers and topics include:

- Plenary - “New Mexico: Reading Intercultural Relations through Rituals”. Miguel Gandert, Fine Art & Documentary Photographer, Professor of Communication and Journalism, University of New Mexico.
- Fireside Chat with John Condon, Regent's Professor of Communication & Journalism, University of New Mexico.  
Interviewed by Janet Bennett, Executive Director, Intercultural Communication Institute.

- Dual-Plenary - “Intel: Achieving Outstanding Business Results by Leveraging Cultural diversity in a Technical Organization – Intel Panel presentation chaired by Caroline Elliott, Intel Fab 7 Test Manufacturing Manager, USA.
- Dual-Plenary – “Appreciative Inquiry for Intercultural Training”. Todd Conklin, Deputy Group leader, Los Alamos National Laboratory
- Plenary – “The Middle East: Where Do We Go From Here?” Dr. Mohamed Zainuba, Associate Professor of Management & Director of Management Development Center, College of Business & Leadership, Fort Hayes State University.

Thanks to Intel's generous sponsorship we are introducing a new “virtual” element to our conference this year. This will allow us to experiment with a variety of virtual conference formats during a small number of the sessions and plenaries. What an exciting opportunity to stay “Ahead of the Curve”!

And not forgetting our need for nourishment and entertainment you can also look forward to a Dine-Around evening in Albuquerque, a Salsa dance class and a “Fajita Friday” evening hosted by the hotel. The fajitas are free and so is the live music so don't forget to bring your dancing shoes!

[Before making your travel plans please read on...!](#)

Our closing reception on Saturday evening will be held at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center ([www.indianpueblo.org](http://www.indianpueblo.org)) which is owned and operated by the 19 Indian Pueblos of New Mexico. You will have the opportunity to relax in beautiful surroundings, circulate around bonfires and two outdoor courtyards, enjoy a delicious buffet created by the Center's talented chef, visit the museum and galleries, and watch an Indian Dance Performance. You can even do some last-minute shopping in the book store and numerous gifts shops.

You might also want to spend a few extra days exploring New Mexico before or after the

conference so do check out this website [www.newmexico.org](http://www.newmexico.org). As you will see, with it's ancient cultures, world-famous cuisine and magnificent landscapes, New Mexico is definitely a "Land of Enchantment"!

Jan O'Brien  
Conference Chair

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#### **4. Opportunities to Sponsor, Exhibit, Advertise**

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You are invited to Sponsor, Exhibit or Advertise at the 2006 SIETAR-USA conference in Albuquerque! Sponsorship is an opportunity to showcase your company or organization and gain recognition as a supporter of intercultural education, research and practice. By exhibiting at the SIETAR-USA Annual Conference, you will be able to highlight your products and services to an audience of 400 people who travel, read, use, design and purchase products and services such as yours. Placing an advertisement in our Conference Program provides your organization with the opportunity to reach a diverse audience of intercultural professionals and students. Your support is essential for us, and we hope that your organization will champion our effort to bring together intercultural professionals at our annual conferences.

To ensure that you receive the maximum benefit from your support of SIETAR-USA, please request your information package, which describes the conference, sponsorship levels, benefits, and information for exhibitors and advertisers not later than August 1. To request your package please email Monica Mumford at [mgmumford@fastmail.net](mailto:mgmumford@fastmail.net).

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#### **5. Local Group News**

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SIETAR Austin

**Sietar Austin had a busy year reaching out to a variety of groups. We began the Fall of 2005 with a Series "Thriving Interculturally: Moving from Terrorism to Peace." Alan Pogue helped us consider how photographs and stories of Haiti and Afghanistan effect our perceptions, our attitudes and ultimately our actions. We moved on in our next programs to compare how the global media covers terrorism, what is shown and not shown, reported and not reported, and how images are used to elicit responses. In the Spring, Cody Brady, Jenell Scherbel, and Anne Pham-Macharia facilitated discussions on how external factors such as language, cultural traditions, religious and political differences play a role in the way we interact with our close friends and family. Next, Susan Dyer facilitated a program to serve the health care community: "The Hispanic Patient: Cultural Competency for Health Care Providers." In "Connecting Head, Hand, and Heart: Building Intercultural Support Networks," Dr. Cody Brady, Ph.D. brought findings from her dissertation, "Global Families: Experiences of Moving Cross-Culturally with a Global Corporation" which increased our understanding about the importance and types of support necessary for successful relocation.**

Anne Pham-Macharia was elected President and Jenell Scherbel, Vice President. We are planning two exciting programs for the Fall season and two in the Spring.

## 6. United Nations Report

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As the Main Representative of Global SIETAR at the United Nations for 2006, I have been learning more about the United Nations, and how SIETAR can play a more integral role in enhancing cultural sensitivity, training and awareness towards the missions and activities of the United Nations, particularly towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

As Interculturalists, we can be greater advocates for the UN by contributing to their goals and missions across the world through our work, passion and expertise. Margaret Atheley from UNA-USA discussed the importance of sharing the UN Story with NGOs and that getting knowledge on how to reach out to the youth will be indispensable for the future of the UN. Shamina de Gonzaga shared with us how the MDGs could be used as a marketing tool. She mentioned that the general public in different countries are not aware of the MDGs and how their own countries are trying to achieve the goals.

Serendipitously, throughout the past year, a SIETAR NGO Task Force was created to address how to move SIETAR forward as an active NGO. The goals of the SIETAR NGO initiative are:

1. To create an international competency/expertise pool of SIETAR members willing to provide voluntary work for humanitarian, developmental, research or solidarity work
2. To provide training for this pool and assure the highest standards of quality and ethics of its members
3. To market this both internally to our members and externally to inter-governmental organisations (UN, UN agencies, European Union etc...) and also private foundations, etc.
4. To inform our Congress of field research in these critical areas, this will hopefully attract more academics, social and NGO sectors. Giving us more credibility and visibility.

Gaëlle Piernikarch, a member of the NGO Task Force, raised great awareness about the NGO Task Force at the SIETAR Germany Symposium in Bonn on March 3-4, 2006. Recently, SIETAR Europa attended the recent International Salon

for Peace Initiatives in Paris from June 2-4, 2006 to also establish SIETAR's position in relation to the NGO and intergovernmental organisation as the leading non-profit organization in the Intercultural Field.

As for how SIETAR USA members can become more involved, I will be reaching out to both SIETAR USA and local chapters in the near future to provide more information about this initiative. I look forward to connecting with others towards a pilot project in the U.S.

For more information about the UN and ongoing activities, SIETAR Members can go directly to DPI-NGO's updated website at:

<http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/> to read summaries of weekly briefings, press releases, web casts, radio, and access other useful links.

For information on UN partnerships with civil society, NGOs and with business at:

[www.un.org/partners/business/index.asp](http://www.un.org/partners/business/index.asp)

If any SIETAR chapters are interested in finding a speaker for an event, they can contact me directly at [kengbummele@yahoo.com](mailto:kengbummele@yahoo.com), as I can assist reaching out to the Speakers Bureau at the UN. Chapters should be prepared to absorb travel costs for the speakers.

Additionally, an NGO calendar of events was also created last year. As the Alternative Representative for SIETAR last year, I contributed to discussions and development of the website with other NGOs, which can be accessed at:

<http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/calendar.htm>

Submitted by Karen Eng.

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## 7. SUSA Board Report

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Editor's Note: This is a new feature of the S-USA News. It is important to understand how your society is organized. The S-USA Board consists of 12 members including officers. Each Board member has a *portfolio* for which they are responsible. This collection of portfolios comprises the organization or structure of S-USA. With each issue of the newsletter, we will invite the Board members to describe their sphere of responsibility and what is happening within that area. The first report belongs to Susan Dyer who serves as the liaison

between the Board and the Special Interest Groups.

### **The Status of Special Interest Groups**

Susan Dyer, Special Interest Groups Coordinator

All members of groups which have felt that they share goals and interests with SIETAR USA can rejoice. The vague relationship between these organizations was clarified by the S-USA Board at its annual retreat in April, 2006.

Board members agreed that they wanted to encourage and assist groups which have called themselves Special Interest Groups while at the same time recognizing their independence and freedom to engage in activities as their members wish.

As usual, luncheon tables will be reserved for each SIG that request one during this year's conference and other activities may be supported by both organizations. The organizations which have identified themselves as SIGs are:

- Foro Intercultural Latino
- SIETAR PAC – Pride Across Cultures
- “Jewish Culture”

The Board encourages all SIETAR USA members to participate in these Special Interest Groups. Meet their members at the conference and learn more about their activities.

The resolution which was approved follows:

Proposal to the S-USA Board, April, 2006

The SIETAR USA Board confirms the following:

Recognizes that Special Interest Groups offer its members an opportunity to:

- Promote the mission and values of SIETAR USA
- Explore themes common to SIETAR USA and the SIG
- Cooperate on mutual projects

Encourages the following activities of SIGs:

- Convene at annual meetings of SIETAR USA and other intercultural conferences
- Make presentations at these conferences
- Provide a forum for its members to engage in dialogue
- Create an active online community
- Post messages on a listserv
- Promote professional growth within the intercultural field

Guiding principles:

- SIETAR USA welcomes the existence of SIGs which promote the mission and values of SIETAR USA.
- SIETAR USA encourages SIGs to appoint a contact person who will be responsible for liaison with SIETAR USA.
- All SIGs are independent organizations and function autonomously.
- SIGs are neither affiliates nor divisions of SIETAR USA.
- From time to time, SIETAR USA may give special assistance to SIGs, for example provide information about their activities to SIETAR USA members, or designate tables for SIG members and interested persons during lunch at SUSA Conferences.
- SIETAR USA may withdraw liaison from any SIG which engages in activities inconsistent with the mission and values of SIETAR USA.
- There is neither real or implied obligation nor liability to each other between SIGs and SIETAR USA.

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## **8. Obituary**

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In Remembrance of Robin Bragge.

In remembering Robin Bragge, the Minnesota SIETAR Planning Board mentioned some key phrases and memories of Robin:

"endless energy and passion for her work and life"

"inspiring to all of us -- she made this work look 'easy'"

"positive energy, contagious smile and spirit"

"an exemplary life helping us all truly learn to be more understanding of one another"

"always willing to help"

"she had so many connections around the

world... people are drawn to her"  
...memories of her laughter and amazing ability to make people feel comfortable, to lighten up a situation, to just make everything OK for everybody

Robin Bragge, left a body of work and much inspiration behind when she died unexpectedly February 22, 2006, of complications following surgery. Robin dedicated her professional and personal life to helping people feel at home in the world. She was the manager of the International Classroom Connection (ICC) program at the Minnesota International Center,

Working with the ICC program, Robin combined her love of international education, intercultural training, and youth advocacy. The ICC Program involved training international speakers (mostly university students) to connect with elementary and secondary schoolchildren through classroom presentations and events. This program provided a wonderful opportunity for international students and community members to experience school life in the U.S. and to share their culture and personal experiences with interested and captive audiences. Under Robin's leadership, there was great success and tremendous growth in the classroom program. In late January, MIC was awarded the Carol Marquis Excellence in Schools Award by the World Affairs Councils of America for having the best schools program in the nation.

Robin loved making music, playing the conga drums, and hosting game nights (she owned more board games than anyone we know!), and the togetherness these activities inspired. Robin had an incredible gift of relating to people from all walks of life and in making each person with whom she conversed feel special and important. She exuded positive energy and a sense of peace.

Robin was a scholarship recipient to the SIETAR-USA conference in 2004 and many people who met her there for the first time have expressed to our local SIETAR group how much of a positive impact Robin made upon them—even in short conversations. We were blessed as the Minnesota SIETAR Planning Board to work with Robin. Her presence at our meetings is sorely missed. We are currently developing the Robin Bragge Memorial Scholarship Fund through our Minnesota SIETAR group. The scholarship funds will be used to send motivated graduate students or community members to

future SIETAR conferences in Robin's honor. If you would like more information about the Robin Bragge Memorial Scholarship, please feel free to e-mail: [askbasma@gmail.com](mailto:askbasma@gmail.com)

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## 9. Farewell

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This is my last newsletter as editor. The Navy has a term for people who are among the first crew of a ship: they are "plank owners." As the founding editor of S-USA News, I am a plank owner. I've enjoyed observing SIETAR USA grow from a concept to a reality. Much work went into organizing S-USA prior to its inaugural conference in Northern Virginia in 1999, and ever since. But the work has been done with great passion and love for the society, for the intercultural field, and for the members. Perhaps there is nothing more satisfying than to serve and give back to an organization that stands for the scholarship that underlies our field, and represents the professionalism of the best in our field. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Sandy Fowler

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## 10. How to Reach Us

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