

The AACP Newsletter

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An Interview with Dr. Victor Thompson

Interviewed by Leonard D. Chan

Let's start by having you tell everyone about yourself.

Before I begin, I would like to thank you for your continual support for NPIEN (National Pacific Islander Educator Network) and the opportunity to participate in this interview, for your recognition of the Pacific Islander community.

I am the Past President of the Board of Directors, and Executive Director for NPIEN. Our President is Bianca Larson, a teacher in the Paramount Unified School District. Professionally, I am the Director of Student Support Services for the Los Angeles County Office of Education, and a former school principal, assistant principal, teacher, and track coach. I am a native of Long Beach, CA, and my parents were part of the first wave of Samoans that came to the US Mainland in the 1950s.

Tell us about the founding of NPIEN.

NPIEN was founded in 2001, following the first Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander Higher Education Summit in Washington D.C., sponsored by then Congressman Robert Underwood of Guam. Congressman Underwood challenged us to create a network of Pacific Islander educators that would support higher educational attainment in the Pacific Islander community. The founding board members included Dr. Michael Perez, Cal State University, Fullerton, Sefa Aina, UCLA, Dr. Alofa Tanuvasa, Compton Unified School District, Freda Tanuvasa, Los Angeles Unified School District, Joyce Mann, Paramount Unified School District, and Sevia Ma'ae, Lynwood Unified School District. Art Medina, California State University, Long Beach, is another board member who played an important role in NPIEN's early years.

What is NPIEN's mission and goals?

Our mission statement is "Uniting the Resources of the Village to strengthen families, the community, and to promote educational excellence." What this means is in order for a Pacific Islander student to excel academically, we need the support of the entire community, teachers, parents, government officials, community based organizations, businesses, mentors to support our students. Only about 9% of our students graduate from college, and we have few professional mentors or educators in our community. Thus, we need caring people from throughout the community to support the success of our children.

What are some of the things you do?

Our annual education conference is our biggest outreach event of the year. We also visit a number of schools as board members, along with other professionals and educators, and provide motivational speeches, and career and financial aid information for students, as well as introduce teaching strategies to faculty. Our fundraising efforts allow us to maintain a website with resources for students, parents, and teachers on how to prepare for

college and future careers. We also provide grants for schools to promote the Pacific Islander culture, and purchase instruments and costumes for cultural music and dance performances.

Who are the members?

Our members are students, teachers, parents, and community members. You do not have to be a Pacific Islander to join, just an interest in learning more.

How can someone join your organization?

Contact us at www.npien.com or (562) 496-2319, fees are very nominal.

Tell us about your upcoming conference.

The conference is our culminating event of the year, and is a family event for all ages. It will be held on November 17, 2007 at Paramount High School in Paramount, CA. Contact us at www.npien.com or (526) 496-2319 to register.

What are some of the workshops?

The workshops will include a College Networking session where college students from many universities can meet, a Dance Workshop with Pacific Islander dance instruction, Ukulele classes by Uncle Henry Kamae, Arts and Crafts for children, a Nutrition class for parents, Pacific Islander teaching strategies for teachers by Dr. Maenette Benham, and student workshops on how to have a successful future by motivational speaker Saitia Fa'aifo (AKA Dr. Aloha).

Who are the keynote speakers?

Dr. Maenette Benham, author of *Indigenous Educational Models*, and professor at Michigan State University, will speak in the morning session, Dr. Aloha, author of the *Riches of Respect* and Hawaii's top motivational speaker, will speak in the afternoon.

Tell us about the Award Luncheon.

The luncheon and program are an opportunity to recognize top academic students that were nominated by their teachers, along with honoring those teachers and community members who serve our Pacific Islander students. A buffet luncheon is provided for these students and their guests.

Who are some of the performers?

Several Pacific Islander student clubs will perform some of the traditional dances and music from the Pacific Islands. The clubs are from Davis Middle School in Compton, CA Paramount High School, Cabrillo High School, Long Beach, CA, and Carson High School, Carson, CA.

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Give Us Your Feedback

Please feel free to send us your reviews, comments, and book suggestions. You can contact us at - aacpinc@asianamericanbooks.com

Up Coming Events

Here are some events that AACCP will soon be attending. Invite us to your events.

Date/Time	Event	Location
Nov. 3 11am-4pm	Sacramento Chinese Cultural Foundation's Children's Book and Gift Faire	Bethany Presbyterian Church Sacramento, CA
Nov. 3 11am-4pm	Sacramento Chinese Cultural Foundation's Children's Book and Gift Faire	Bethany Presbyterian Church Sacramento, CA
Jan. 12 2pm	4th Annual Poetry In San Mateo Day A Beginning of the Year Poetry Celebration	SM Main Library San Mateo, CA
Other Event of Interest that AACCP May Not Attend		
Oct. 31- Nov. 4	Nat. Assoc. for Multicultural Ed. (NAME) 2007 Conference	Hyatt Regency Baltimore, MD
Nov. 17 8-3pm	National Pacific Islander Educator Network (NPIEN) 6th Annual Education Conference	Paramount High School 14429 S. Downey Ave. Paramount, CA
Nov. 15-18	CA School Lib. Assoc. Conference 2007	Ontario Convention Center Ontario, CA

An Interview with Dr. Victor Thompson

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I've been doing some research for new books dealing with Pacific Islanders that would be appropriate for kids. I haven't had much luck. The newest book that I could find is Surfer of the Century on the life of Duke Kahanamoku. This book is hard to find at any of the local chain bookstores in the San Francisco Bay Area. I was even having trouble finding Pacific Islander books at the library. The 2006 US Census estimates say that there are over a million people, living in America, who are at least part Native Hawaii or Pacific Islander. How come there aren't more Pacific Islander educational materials being produced and available? Give us your thoughts about what can be done to change this situation.

The only publishers that I am aware of that publish or promote Pacific Islander literature on the US mainland are KIN Publications, Daniel Pouesi in Carson, CA, Tui Communications in Vacaville, CA (Margo Lenson), your organization, and East West Discovery Press (Icy Smith). Bess Press in Hawaii and Pasifika Books in New Zealand are others I would recommend.

Editor's Message

Hello Everyone,

Happy Halloween! I'm late with the newsletter as usual.

A couple of events to highlight on the schedule - first we've added a JACL conference, being held this weekend in Reno, to our schedule. We will only be exhibiting on Sat. Nov. 3rd.

Oliver Chin (author of Julie Black Belt, The Year of the Pig, and other books) and Ann Bowler (author of our featured book Adventures of the Treasure Fleet) are schedule to be with us at the Sacramento Chinese Cultural Foundation's Children's Book and Gift Faire in Sacramento this Nov. 3rd.

Margo King Lenson (editor of our featured book Pacific Voices Talk Story Vol. 4) will be on hand at the NPIEN conference in Paramount, CA.

On January 12th, we will hold our 4th annual beginning of the year poetry event. This time we will be co-hosting the event with the San Mateo Main Library which will be letting us use their new and spacious confines. Please come and share your poetry or just come to hear others. We hope you can attend one or more of these events.

Many thanks to Dr. Victor Thompson for doing the interview with us. Thank you Sophie and Susan for your help with this month's newsletter.

Our next newsletter will be our November/December combined edition and will come out in early December. Have a great and thankful November.

Leonard Chan
Executive Editor

I suspect the reason that these materials are not being produced is due to lack of demand here. With standards-based curricula, there is little time to introduce materials about Pacific Islanders. Since so few of us are involved in education or government, there are no advocates in our communities to promote our histories. We likely need legislation to ensure that our stories are told.

Do you have some recommendations for good Pacific Islander related books?

The following two books are outstanding teaching strategy texts for teachers:

Benham, Maenette K.P. and Cooper, Joanne E. (2000) *Indigenous Educational Models for Contemporary Practice*, Mahwah, New Jersey: LEA Publishers

Benham, Maenette K.P. and Heck, Ronald H. (1998) *Culture and Educational Policy in Hawaii*, Mahwah, New Jersey: LEA Publishers

This book is a great book for students and teachers:
Resistance in Paradise, AFSC and School District of Philadelphia (<http://www.afsc.org/resources/paradise.htm>)

Tui Communications has an entire series on individuals from the Pacific islands who have settled here on the mainland, and their experiences and struggles. (<http://www.tuicom.com>)

Lal, Dhyan, *Island Boy*. Authorhouse 2005 is the biography of Dr. Dhyan Lal, the only PI superintendent on the US Mainland. (<http://asianamericanbooks.com/books/3481.htm>)

The Riches of Respect is written by Dr. Aloha, Saitia Fa'aifo (<http://asianamericanbooks.com/books/3482.htm>)

Dr. Aloha and Dr. Benham will be at our conference on 11/17/07 along with Tui Communications

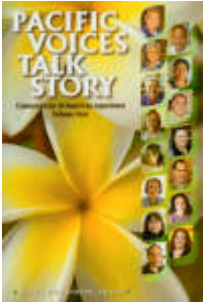
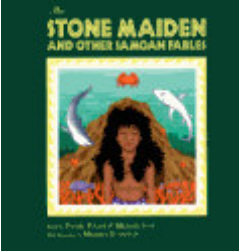
Very little is taught at the grade school level about Pacific Islander history, culture, geography, and the people. I'd be willing to bet that most Americans could not even find Guam




or American Samoa on a map. Why is it important for all Americans to know more about Pacific Islanders?

It is amazing to note that the Pacific Islands are the most popular tourist venue in the world, yet so little is known about the people. We are the people who invented surfing, the hula, the luau, the ukulele, comprise many NFL teams, yet most of this is nothing more than stereotypes of who we really are. These stereotypes categorize us as entertainers, athletes, and non-academic, obstacles for children. The fact that multiple languages, histories, and cultures exist among the various islands of the sea shows much diversity among our people. Americans only know the Lilo and Stitch and Elvis in Hollywood side of our people. We are a kind, generous people who enjoy serving others, and can be a real asset to the entire community if given the opportunity.

Thank you very much for this interview and we wish you all the best with your conference and mission.

The following books on this and the next page are discounted by 20% from the listed price for subscribers to our newsletter. The discounts on these books end November 23, 2007.

	<p>Pacific Voices Talk Story Conversations of American Experience Volume Four</p> <p>Edited by Margo King Lenson 2007, 380 pages, Paperback. Note: shipping for this book may take a few weeks.</p> <p>Wikipedia and other encyclopedias could give you statistics and general information about tiny Pacific Islands like Niue, but to get to know the people from such places, read Margo King Lenson's latest collection of wonderful "talks." In this volume (vol 4) Margo talks with Pacific Islander Americans that came from Guam, Hawaii, Samoa, Marshall Islands, Easter Island, New Zealand, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, and yes, Niue.</p> <p>Item #3480, Normally \$21.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$17.56</p>
	<p>The Stone Maiden and Other Samoan Fables</p> <p>Retold By Daniel Pousesi and Michael Igoe Illustrated by Michael Evanston 1994, 44 pages, Paperback.</p> <p><i>The Stone Maiden and Other Samoan Fables</i> is a collection of 18 short stories. Like other fables from around the world, these Samoan fables conclude with interesting morals. Here's your chance to get this hard to find classic.</p> <p>Item #2454, Normally \$10.00 ... for newsletter subscribers \$8.00</p>

	<p>Going Home to a Landscape Writings by Filipinas</p> <p>Edited by Marianne Villanueva and Virginia Cerenio 2003, 311 pages, Paperback.</p> <p><i>Going Home to a Landscape</i> is a collection of short stories and poetry by 52 Filipina (Filipino women) writers. Like most anthologies, the topics vary greatly and are impossible to describe in few words. However, the writing in this collection is excellent and the Filipino word glossary very informative.</p> <p>Item #3478, Normally \$17.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$14.36</p>
	<p>Adventures of the Treasure Fleet China Discovers the World</p> <p>By Ann Bowler Illustrated by Lak-Khee Tay-Audouard 2006, 32 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>Sailing for the emperor of China on seven voyages in the early 1400's Admiral Zheng He explored the vast "Western Oceans" for the purposes of trade and friendship. This historical fiction text includes searching for and destroying pirates, confronting the king of Siam, and bringing back leopards, lions, zebras, and giraffes. Told in story form on vertical tablets, the author has added some fiction for interest. Facts gleaned from diaries of crew members and inscriptions were used to document the facts of the story and are included on each page. Charming whimsical illustrations embellish the text.</p> <p>Item #3479, Normally \$19.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$15.96</p>
	<p>Always Come Home To Me</p> <p>By Belle Yang 2007, 27 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>A young Chinese brother and sister are saddened when they learn that their father had given away the family pigeons to their uncle. The kids runaway from home in search of the pigeons. Will the children and pigeons ever make it back home? Read Belle Yang's latest picture book and find out.</p> <p>Item #3477, Normally \$16.99 ... for newsletter subscribers \$13.59</p>