

# INVITATION TO JOIN THE AATF 2010 BOOK CLUB

The Book Club was founded five years ago by AATF President Margot Steinhart to bring French teachers together to discuss books during the year and was formally initiated at the 2005 Convention in Quebec City. Themes since the Quebec conference have included Literature and Film, Francophone Louisiana, Belgium, and Education and its Challenges. This year's theme, chosen by AATF President-Elect Ann Sunderland, is "La Diversité francophone: passé, présent, futur." The focus of the *French Review* linked with the 2010 Convention in Philadelphia will be Algeria. For this reason, our selections are from Africa (the Maghreb and Senegal), with one offering the perspective of the daughter of North African immigrants in France. What an exciting opportunity this is to learn more about these regions of the world and to enrich our classes. Feel free to order all of the books or just one, to read for your own pleasure, or to get together with members of your chapter as well as at the national convention for stimulating conversations and ideas for classroom use. An effort was made to choose different genres as well as levels of complexity. However, common themes across the three books can be discovered. Here are the 2010 selections:

*Kiffe kiffe demain* by Faïza Guène. Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2004. (Available at [www.amazon.com]). You can also order through Ideal Foreign Books, toll free 1-800-284-2490, 718-297-7477, fax 718-297-7645 or [idealforeignbooks@att.net]; Alain Fetaya has offered a 20% discount for AATF members).

*Neuf nouvelles: hommage aux Sénégalaises*, edited by M. Kathleen Madigan. Eatontown, NJ: Academic Press ENE, 2008. (E-mail Maria at [academicpressene@aol.com] for pricing information, with a phone number so you can be contacted if you prefer to pay by credit card, or you can pay by check. AATF members can get a discount and free shipping and handling by sending a check to Academic Press ENE, 39 Redfern Road, Eatontown, NJ 07724. Please mention that you are an AATF member).

*30 Contes du Maghreb*. by Jean Muzi. Paris: Castor Poche Flammarion, 2003. (Available at [www.amazon.ca]; please note that this is the Canadian branch of Amazon. You can also order through Ideal Foreign Books, toll free 1-800-284-2490 or 718-297-7477 or fax: 718-297-7645 or [idealforeignbooks@att.net]; Alain Fetaya has offered a 20% discount for AATF members).

The author of our first selection, Faïza Guène, is the daughter of Algerian immigrants to France. The fifteen year old narra-

tor of *Kiffe Kiffe demain* has a background similar to that of the author, except that her parents are from Morocco. Doria has grown up in a public housing project outside Paris; her neighborhood does not have a good reputation. *A lycéenne*, she lives with her mother, since her father returned to Morocco to find a younger woman. The slang and direct speech of the suburbs, with its special brand of anger, humor, and hope, is recorded in this intimate journal. Likely to appeal to teenagers as well as adults, this book was recommended by *French Review* Editor-in-Chief Christopher P. Pinet, who suggests, "it is a great introduction to the concerns of French youth today, and not just minority youth. It is easy and fun to teach and great on contemporary France."

For the second selection, the names of the authors of the short stories in *Neuf Nouvelles: Hommage aux Sénégalaises*, deserve to be featured: Aïssatou Cissé, Nafissatou Dia Diouf, Khadi Fall, Abdoulaye Elimane Kane, Mariama Sy Ndiaye, Anne Piette, Charles Cheikh Sow, and Pape Tall. These authors generously contributed to the making of this collection when I worked with them during my Fulbright year in Senegal (2003-2004), quickly earning my respect. It is a great privilege and honor to introduce them and their artistic literary work to you. While I did write a separate book about Senegal, and I hope to share some personal experiences at the Philadelphia 2010 convention as an aid in understanding, our focus here is on the work of these talented writers; they were all born in Senegal, with the exception of Anne Piette, who was born in France, but has lived enough years in Senegal for many Senegalese to think of her as one of them. The challenge which I gave these writers as I met with them was to create a short story honoring a Senegalese woman, which could be based on a true story. Now, those who have met the Muse are aware that when she appears it is not always in response to a particular topic request. Yet these authors rose to the occasion and in stories lyrical, moving and varied, are helping to depict a positive image of women in Africa which could influence many. At the same time, over eight hundred vocabulary words are explained (in French) and the short stories are followed by comprehension and reflection questions, as well as activities, so classroom applications are included.

*30 Contes du Maghreb* by Jean Muzi is a fabulous introduction to North Africa, with tales from Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. The author introduces his *contes* as ones which will permit readers to discover "un peu de l'âme du Maghreb." Born in Casablanca,

Muzi later studied literature, cinema, and art in Paris; in addition to several collections of fables and tales, Muzi has also made a variety of films, including documentaries. The stories in *30 Contes du Maghreb* are culturally rich and educational; each is introduced with a lesson or thought for reflection and some tales could be used at all levels if time for new vocabulary, forms and structures is allowed; a brief five-page glossary at the end of the book explains some terms not common in the West (e.g. *burnous* and *fellah*). While not all of the tales may be appropriate for the very young (e.g. the one about polygamy), there is certainly something for everyone here, and teachers may be charmed most of all.

*Bonne lecture!*

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