

as books on how to draw anime and manga pictures.

There are other things a teacher-librarian could do to enhance literacy through the graphic novel. These include inviting local vendors or artists, and even the school's art teachers, to do workshops or hold information sharing sessions for the students; organising book-signing sessions; giving the students the opportunity to meet the artists behind the production of these materials; and holding school-wide graphic novel cover contests. In this last case, students could be asked to re-illustrate the cover of existing graphic novels or draw covers for suggested forthcoming titles.

Having said all this, I do not wish to suggest that graphic novels are a panacea for what ails reading and literacy. There are numerous other things that the teacher-librarian can do in partnership with the school, community, and home. The promotion of reading through graphic novels just happens to be one way to promote reading and the development of literacy skills. ■

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Building a Mult Karen Smulevitch

A few years ago, when I was the teacher-librarian at a full credit summer school, one of the OAC English teachers asked me to prepare a list of suggested reading for his students' independent novel study. I asked him whether there were any special criteria attached to the selections. His response was, "I don't want them reading anything by dead white men." This was, to me, a rather unique way of saying he would prefer that his students read multicultural fiction. When I attempted to put together a collection of suitable books, I was amazed that I could locate only about five. Since this was not my home school, there was very little that I could do about improving this deficiency in the collection. However, his remarks have always stayed with me and have influenced my thinking when purchasing books to add to my own fiction collection.

The school at which I currently teach is very homogenous. Out of a total student population of approximately 1000 students, there are probably fewer than 100 who are members of visible racial or ethnic minorities. In fact, this is the only school at which I have ever taught where Black History Month receives only cursory attention. Last year I had the opportunity to invite one of the White Pine nominated authors to visit our school. I arranged for a rather large audience to hear her speak because, besides being a wonderful novel, her book dealt with a topic very relevant to several courses across the high school curriculum. I was disturbed by the lukewarm reception our students gave her talk. The feedback I received indi-