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Welcome to the first UHURU of the new millennium. It’s been thirty years and the fire is still lit. I want to start off by thanking the new and returning staff that helped me as I found my bearings in such an immense opportunity. I had some big shoes to fill, but I think I did quite well. I was told each issue of UHURU has a personality of its own and in light of this, “Reconciliation” fits mine. I am a mender by nature and I hope that is what is achieved in this issue.

Time is supposed to heal all wounds, but time without effort is bound to fail. Whether minor or major, there are issues on this campus and in the world in general that are hindering our progress. In this issue we explore some of those topics in hopes to begin mending fences, stop burning bridges and begin a collective awakening that will help us grow. We can not expect time to sweep away issues that are ingrained in our everyday lives, there must be an effort to bring it all to the surface, discuss them and begin to find a compromise if not a solution. Then, and only then, can we begin to move forward.

I implore you to read beyond the words and find something to grab onto and relate to where you are now and where you want to go. Take nothing at face value; you are cheating yourself if you do. The world has so much more to offer to those who learn from the past and use it as a foundation for the future. The journey begins now.
Imagine that you are walking on the campus of Kent State University and someone comes up to you and asks what happened with the Rodney King beating or the O.J. Simpson trial, or what was the difference between being light-skinned and dark-skinned? Would you be able to answer? Would you be able to explain yourself fully? I don’t think I would be able to answer, and that is a shame. It’s so sad to see that African-Americans cannot answer questions about their past. It seems that once something concerning African-Americans happens and is big in the news for a month or two, it slowly becomes forgotten.

This brings me to the question of what is reconciliation? When I was first asked to write something about reconciliation, I had no idea what I was going to write. Actually, I didn’t even know what the term meant. It took lots of thought about the African-American community and how issues aren’t being thought about anymore to come up with my own definition. To me, reconciliation means to mend or restore the past/present history that has been laid to rest and/or put on the back burner. According to the dictionary, reconciliation is to make arguments, ideas, texts and accounts consistent and to bring into harmony. The reason I am sharing this information with you is because that is the theme of this edition of UHURU magazine.

I feel that this edition is and will be very beneficial to the students on this campus, and I hope that it is taken seriously and receives positive feedback. By reading this magazine, students hopefully will have a greater knowledge and understanding of why such events and issues such as The O.J. Simpson Trial, the Rodney King Beating and light-skinned versus dark-skinned are important, and why the staff of this magazine chose this term as a theme. What I am looking for in the students and myself after they read this magazine is that we shouldn’t forget those issues that make us who we are. Just because they are not being talked about in the media now, we should still stay on top of the subject matter. All these issues concerning African-Americans are not just there because the media have other things to talk about. They are out there because it’s a part of our history. So not knowing is like not knowing ourselves.
Caught in the Bushes

By Reginald Clemons
The 2000 Presidential Elections was the most controversial and sickening event in memory, there was the usual mudslinging, extensive media coverage, and the redundant sounds of “blah, blah, blah” from various spin-doctors. What made this episode of “Which Privileged White Male Wants to be President” notable was how arrogant, clueless, and uninformed George W. Bush presented himself to be throughout the duration of the charade that mainstream America called an election.

Another eyesore was how the presidency was handed to “Dubya” through the use of strong-arm tactics (the blatant disenfranchisement of thousands of Afrikan-American voters in Florida) by the Republican Party, the Governor of Florida, Jeb Bush, and the conservative Supreme Court. To make matters worse, the American media virtually ignored the issue, and then conveniently forgot about it. Except for the Reverend Jesse Jackson (whose own problems have been in the media lately) and the Reverend Al Sharpton, most of America’s leadership, media and spin-doctors have remained morbidly silent. The Democratic National Committee has not made this atrocity a priority at all. Instead it unsuccessfully attempted to win the presidency in court, but when the smoke cleared, George W. Bush was named president of the most powerful nation in the world.

Amazingly enough, George W. Bush, who has less than ten years of civil service and who did not serve his country, who was governor of the state of Texas (which has the largest number of inmates on Death Row) says he is a “compassionate conservative”.

And so a man who is known to have difficulty pronouncing words with more than two syllables is now president! How did this happen? If anyone watched the debates, it was evident that Bush did not clearly state his position on issues important to Afrikan Americans, such as Affirmative Action. Bush had the audacity to coin the term “Affirmative Access”, which is a cowardly way to say that he is against Affirmative Action. Of course, it was obvious that the election in Florida was rigged. There were reports of ballot boxes being found on the beach, and in officials’ homes. Basically it was a joke. With Jeb Bush as governor of Florida, it was no mystery who was going to prevail in a recount situation! Along with the reports of voter intimidation in Florida, there were reports nationwide of similar
incidents occurring in urban areas, such as sending people to the wrong polling location, and of polling stations being closed early.

The 2000 election has shown Afrikan Americans that no matter what we do in the United States, our vote does not count, and justice is not for all. It never has been. The 2000 Presidential Election drew the largest Afrikan American voter turnout in American history, but it was to no avail, as the candidate who had the most votes was not elected. With Bush's appointment of "House Negroes" such as Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice, along with his nomination of John Ashcroft (a proven enemy of our people, who has voted against every Civil Rights measure) for Attorney General, the future does not look good. Some Americans are looking forward to 2004 when another Presidential Election will take place, but I am no longer enthusiastic about voting. Nevertheless, I will vote, because if I don't, OUR ENEMIES WILL WIN AND WE WILL NEVER BE FREE. The struggle continues, and no matter what "Bushes" or CHAINS (Cheney) are placed in the way, we have to continue to fight.

To be as diplomatic as possible, I have interviewed two people with differing views about the 2000 Presidential Election: Ronald Carson, A Gore-Liberman campaign worker, and Nic Smith, former President of KSU's College Republicans. Both men were honest in their accounts and were willing to take part in these interviews. I would like to thank both Mr. Carson and Mr. Smith for their input.

What Really Happened:
An interview with Ronald Carson, a Gore-Liberman campaign worker

UHURU: So Mr. Carson, what was your role in the Gore-Liberman campaign?

R.C.: I was part of the National Advance Team, which traveled around the country with then Vice President Al Gore and Senator Joseph Liberman. It was my job to ensure that all logistics were taken care of, such as the press and the organization of the motorcade.

UHURU: Could you elaborate on that?

R.C.: Yes. In every city the Vice President visited, he would be accompanied by a press corps, various members of the press such as USA Today, The Associated Press, CNN, etc. It was my job to make sure they were properly organized, and that they were accommodated with everything that they needed, such as lighting equipment, computer

Right: Nic Smith, former President of KSU's College Republicans, gives his accounts of what took place in the 2000 Presidential election.
access, microphones, etc. I supervised these duties across the nation.

UHURU: What were your opinions of the Presidential Debates, more specifically the last one?

R.C.: I was dismayed at how the media portrayed the debates. All three of the debates were no contest. Unfortunately, the way the media portrayed the debates, all George W. Bush had to do was say his name correctly and the debate was considered a success for him. President Bush completed a few sentences and the media declared him the winner, though Al Gore surpassed Bush in all three debates. I feel that this decided the election, not Florida.

UHURU: Do you think that election was rigged? There were nationwide reports of polls closing early in predominately Afrikan American communities. Could you please state your views on this issue?

R.C.: I want to be as diplomatic as possible, but it is quite easy to see that there were some improprieties in the State of Florida. I also believe that if all the votes in Florida were counted, we would have elected Al Gore instead of George W. Bush. There were reports of police stopping black voters and discouraging blacks from voting. There were also reports of police giving tickets for crimes such as a busted taillight. These actions had a tremendous effect on the outcome of the election, not to mention the 10,000 Jewish voters who supposedly voted for Pat Buchanan in Palm Beach County.

UHURU: Do you have any idea what “Affirmative Access” is?

R.C.: I don’t think anyone does. I think that’s just another display of President Bush’s ignorance concerning the issue, and the media was not critical enough of Bush in getting firm definition of what “Affirmative Access” is.

UHURU: Why do you think the media virtually ignored Bush’s record and ignored the injustices that occurred in Florida?

R.C.: I don’t think the media ignored it, but I do feel that the Republicans deserve credit for putting a good spin on it. I would also like to give credit to James Baker for saying that the votes were tallied four times, when in actuality, the votes were NEVER counted fully.

UHURU: Would you know exactly why thousands of Afrikan American votes in Jacksonville were thrown out entirely?

R.C.: The judge down there said that the votes were not properly cast or postmarked. However, it remains to be seen whether that is true or not. The Miami Herald has done a recount of its own, and according to their results, Al Gore won the State of Florida by an estimated 23,000 votes.

UHURU: Thank you for you time, Mr. Carson.

R.C.: No problem.
The Other Side of the Coin:
An interview with Nic Smith, former President of KSU
College Republicans

**UHURU:** What has been your role, if any, in the Republican Party on campus or abroad?

**N.S.:** I was former President of KSU College Republicans from 1998-1999. I have also helped with a lot of campaigns such as Kevin Couglin, Bob Taft, George Voinovich and Mike DeWine.

**UHURU:** How long have you been involved in political activities such as these?

**N.S.:** Since Fall 1997

**UHURU:** What are your opinions of the 2000 Presidential election?

**N.S.:** It went well for the Bush side. The Bush campaign was more focused than Gore's campaign. Al Gore seemed to change his stance on the issues quite often. Mr. Gore was influenced by the media while Bush stayed with his original strategy throughout the campaign.

**UHURU:** How do you think Bush did in the debates?

**N.S.:** I think the Bush campaign did well. Bush had no expectations, while Gore had high expectations. As long as Bush could prove he could speak effectively, he was fine. Bush is NOT a good public speaker... but neither is Gore.

**UHURU:** During the final debate, Bush mentioned something about “Affirmative Access.” Could you explain what that is, because in my opinion Bush never explained what it was.

**N.S.:** No. I have never heard of it. I didn’t watch the last debate.

**UHURU:** With fewer than ten years political experience, do you think George W. Bush will be a good president?

**N.S.:** Yes

**UHURU:** What are you opinions about what occurred in Florida?

**N.S.:** I didn't like the Supreme Court's involvement. The justices were not impartial at all. It should not have gone to the federal level. I am however, happy that Bush won, because I believe in Bush's politics. The problem with the election was the Florida Supreme Court. They were trying pass new legislation. The Florida Supreme Court made it political, and that's where they went wrong.

**UHURU:** Thank you for your time.
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"Well, you got nappy hair,
nappy’s alright with me.
My hair is straight, you see.

Crooked as can be."

"You’re just a jigaboo.
Tryin’ to find sumthin’ to do.
You’re just a wannabee.

Wanna be better than me."
By Gayle Grace

Assuming that everyone has seen the movie “School Daze,” I think everyone should know these quotes and more importantly what a “Jigaboo” and a “Wannabee” are. We all know what happens when we assume right?

Beginning as far back as slavery, blacks have been taught that our different shades of skin separate us. Little phrases such as “If you light, you alright, if you brown, stick around, if you black, get back,” and the use of “house nigger” and “field nigger” have divided the black community for decades, if not centuries. In today’s society, these ideas of shade superiority among blacks still exists, but in a much more subtle way. In this article I am going to focus on the color issues among black women or should I say “wannabees” (light skinned sisters) and “jigaboos” (dark skinned sisters).

“Of course there is a problem. Women are petty by nature,” replied Chandra, a junior Electronic Media Productions major, when I asked her whether she felt there was still a problem among black women on the light and dark issue. While Jameka, a finance major, replied “No, not personally”.

My personal experience, being light-skinned, is that I know and have heard many stereotypes. I have even dealt with people who were “color struck” (digging the yellow), but personally, I’ve never dealt with another female who I thought was cute just because I’m yellow and I’ve never passed on getting going to think.”

Almost everyone I interviewed on campus felt the media played a big role in how we as black females see each other today. “Look at TV shows and rap videos, most of the time you see females no darker than a paper bag with long hair. Take for instance Next’s video ‘Wifey’, the men have dark skin in the video, but not the women.” Ms. Shana Lee, director of the Student Multicultural Center says. Rukiya, a sophomore Radio/Television major states, “It’s like on TV when they have the ‘token’ black person. She’s always light skinned.” This is very true most of the time. Flip the channels and what do you see? If you turn past BET or MTV, you’ll see music videos with thin, light skinned women with long hair flashing across the screen and if you do find blacks on other channels other than the WB or UPN, they fit the same mold. “You see it [black women trying to look white] on TV and wonder why we ourselves try to look white, and why we see black men dating white women.” Torri, a freshman Aviation major stated. “The media is only playing off what we give them,” Chandra replied.

The discussion about the
media lead to the topic of good hair vs. bad hair. Who started the idea anyway? Answer: white slave owners. Once again it all stems back to slavery. Slaves were taught that they weren’t beautiful and that everything about being white was. It was obvious that whites were the we are beautiful, no matter what shade we are, what size we are, or what our hair looks like, then how can we expect another sister to realize the same? “We need to try to find common ground and build sisterly love.” Alexandria, a sophomore Finance Major concluded. “No matter your shade, you are black”. says Vanessa, an Education major, for all of us sisters to remember. This is the major point. Even though some people do not want to make a full claim of what they are we are still black. We as blacks have come too far to be ashamed of who we are. “We need to stop classifying blacks into shade categories. What the hell is a medium complexion anyways?” says Charletta, a sophomore marketing major. “We need to speak to each other on campus” says Chyna, a Fashion Design major. How many times have we heard this and we still don’t do it? We have to give respect to receive respect. On that note I will end the same way I began, with a quote from “School Daze”

“Don’t you ever worry ‘bout that, cuz I don’t mind being black”.

We as blacks have come to far to be ashamed of who we are.

“We need to stop classifying blacks into shade categories. What the hell is a medium complexion anyways?”

only ones with straight hair, but being biracial gave some blacks the chance to have straight hair as well. Who’s to say what good hair is and what bad hair is? When you put water on my hair, it naps up just like everyone else and think about it, “naps” are just tight curls anyway. To be honest, sometimes I wish my so-called good hair wasn’t so good. We as women should realize that our hair is a statement of ourselves, not our ability to assimilate.

So what is our solution? What can we do to bring black women closer together? The best answer I received was from Ms. Shana Lee, “It starts with self.” If we as black women can not look at ourselves and realize
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If you don’t know how to love yourself, how is it possible for you to love someone else?
"The first act of love was shown by God."

If you don’t know how to love yourself in God, how can you love someone else?” states junior Electronic Media Production major, Chandra Phillips. This is especially true in relationships today. If you don’t know how to love yourself, how is it possible for you to love someone else? Many people try to start relationships without a full understanding of themselves and their purpose. Relationships cannot be successful if you and your partner do not know who you are and what you want out of life. These are some of the contributing factors to our failing relationships.

Many also feel that women have a problem with jealousy, when it comes to their men. “If you are with someone, be secure enough to know that he is with you,” says sophomore Pre-Med Biology major, Gayle Grace. There are too many females that preoccupy themselves with confronting other females about their boyfriend’s roaming eyes. We need to learn how to confront our men about this problem, and not to blame the other woman for the actions of your man. We also need to learn to trust our men. As long as they are only looking and not touching, there is no problem. I know many women who like to look at other men; who doesn’t? Just as long as that is all you are doing and you know whom you are going home to.

“*We need to learn how to communicate with each other. A relationship is give and take, 50/50.*”

This leads to another problem that we as black men and women are having in our relations. We are suffering from a lack of communication. “Men don’t listen to what women want, and women don’t tell men what they want,” states sophomore Finance major, Alexandria Harris. We need to learn how to communicate with each other. A relationship is give and take, 50/50. We need to know that involving others outside of the relationship won’t solve the problems occurring within the relationship. “No communication, no relationship. It’s as simple as that,” says freshman Psychology major, Sheronika Grain. Problems cannot be solved if they remain un-addressed, therefore we need to start communicating more with each other about the problems we are having.

Sometimes we are simply afraid of being alone. “People just want to say that they have a man or they have a woman,” says Gayle. They don’t
understand that just because they have a man/woman, they still may not be happy. Some people feel that by being in a relationship, their partner will fill the emptiness inside of them. And we must realize that another person cannot do this for us. We must learn how to fulfill our own lives without depending on others. When we try to find happiness through other people, it sometimes they try to find people with money, when relationships are not about money either," says Chandra. We need to realize that like the Temptations said, "Beauty is only skin deep." And like Biggie said, "more money, more problems." These things don't last forever and they should not be the basis for a relationship. Relationships should be based on stronger issues than money and looks.

"Many people stay in relationships because 'the sex is good,'"

brings us more grief. This is something that we do not need. We have to start realizing that it is ok to be alone, and that sometimes you need to be alone. We must learn how to accept ourselves for who we are, and not for what others see in us.

Often "people base relationships on looks, though they should not be about looks. Or

There is also the issue of men who try to be a player or a pimp. "They gotta say that they got this girl or that girl, but relationships are not about that," says sophomore nursing major, LaTonya Gordon. Sometimes men do try to act like players or pimps, but not all men are interested in being a player or a pimp. Like sophomore Gregory Simpson said, "F*ck a player, I'm a man." Not all men are interested in being with a lot of women. Some men are looking for a relationship, but many black women don't know how to act when they find a good man. So many women have been wronged in the past that they are now going around sleeping with numerous men, trying to be players as well. Being a player or a pimp is not helping our relationships. If you go around opening your legs to every man that you see, when you do find that special person, he won't want you. Quite frankly, "no man wants to turn a hoe into a house wife."

Many people today feel that white women are stealing our black men. But when I asked around, I got the feeling that many people do not see interracial dating as a problem. "People should be able to date whoever they want to date," says freshman Aviation major, Torri Gunter. Some people may feel that interracial dating is a problem, but ultimately it is the choice of the man/woman. We do not control whom we fall in
love with. Just because the person may be of a different race does not mean a thing. We need to learn how to look beyond color. Let people be happy. You do what you want and let them do what they want.

It is also believed that “men are too busy trying to have sex,” says Alexandria. This is true in some cases, and sometimes relationships end because of opposing ideas about sex. “We should place less emphasis on sex,” says sophomore Michael Johnson. Sex, or the lack thereof, should not be the basis for ending a relationship. As stated before, communication is essential. If we are going to have successful relationships, we have to learn how to talk to one another. You must inform your partner of your views on sex in your relationship, and work together to make the relationship work.

“Many relationships today are started and the people involved are not thinking long term,” says Gayle. Many people stay in relationships because “the sex is good,” but a relationship is not only about sex and intimacy. It is about communication and knowing or understanding each other. Relationships are rooted deep inside, and they cannot prosper if they are not nurtured. Ultimately, they cannot be nurtured without communication.

Relationships are successful because the couple has learned the importance of honesty, self-love, and communication. More of our relationships will be successful when we become more open and understanding of each other.
Rebuilding Minority Organizations

By Ayanna E. Nelson

U.N.I.T.Y. Now, the first thing that may come to mind is the hit song by Queen Latifah. The irony of the acronym is that each letter is separated by periods. The separation of the word UNITY is just as absurd as the separation of minorities on a predominantly white campus.

Minority students here at Kent State University need to be able to gain a cultural connection with other students on campus because there are so few of us. Kent State University has many organizations for minority students to choose from. What happens, though, if the organizations you turn to for comfort, security, and cultural connection, do not connect with other minority organizations? Can we liken them to the periods in U.N.I.T.Y.? Some of you reading this may feel as though this is not a concern, but as you continue, you will see that organizational dis-sension is something that needs to be addressed. In an attempt to figure out what the problem is and how, if possible, it can be fixed, I went on a journey across campus to find the leaders of minority organizations, as well as some faculty viewpoints, to get the low-down on this organization showdown. There were three main questions that I needed answers to:

What’s the problem? How will you help to solve the problem? And how can others help?

“It seemed as if black students had divided into separate groups with limited focus and could no longer see the big picture.”
responses from two elder faculty members and seven minority organizations concerning the questions at hand.

First stop Mwatabu Okantah, professor and advisor to HARAMBEE and the N.A.A.C.P. He feels as though we need a historic perspective of the problem at hand. There is a disconnection between the present and the past, and there is a lack of understanding about how all of this came to be. He mentioned that other than Greek letter organizations, B.U.S. was the only black student organization originally available to black students. Okantah left the university in '78 but returned in '91 and noticed an obvious difference. B.U.S. had been reduced to one of several competing black student organizations. It seemed as if black students had divided into separate groups with limited focus and could no longer see the big picture. When new students arrive on campus and see this division, they feel it has always been this way, and this makes us weak, Okantah points out.

Okantah, being a professor and advisor, can see the relationship problems amongst faculty as well. To him the faculty all have separate agendas. As the director of the Culture Center, he feels that it is part of his mission to reconnect with the students by acting as a liaison. What encourages him is to see organizations such as HARAMBEE, being one of the first organizations committed to doing work in Oscar Ritchie Hall. The emergence of the N.A.A.C.P., B.G.S.A., M.A.S.A., K.A.S.A., and even the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. brothers asking for space in Oscar Ritchie is encouraging, because it shows that students are seeking to reconnect. Okantah tells of how we came together during the KWANZAA program in December when three events-HARAMBEE Open Mic Poetry, the UHURU release party, and the KWANZAA celebration, were happening concurrently. The students were able to communicate with each other and come together. There was a meeting, the first of its kind, held of all of the advisors for the minority organizations on campus. It was decided between Okantah and Marion Styles that they would meet more regularly because of the nature of their positions, and the fact that they work so closely with the student body.

Next stop, Dr. Diedre Badejo, Pan African Studies Chairperson and Professor. She sees the problem with organizations as resulting from a lack of respect when it comes to certain things. The reason scheduling events is difficult is that the groups don't consult with one another. She puts emphasis on the need for respect and professionalism amongst the organizations and the constituents they serve. She points out that all of the organizations serve different needs and that it is very healthy to have a variety of organizations.

"we can agree to disagree, as long as we understand what our principles and objectives are."

According to Dr. Badejo, organizations need to get together when scheduling to work out a calendar, and every organization at the meeting should be acknowledged out of courtesy and respect. Dr. Badejo feels it is a part of our responsibility to leave something behind for the next generation.

After speaking with the elders, I decided to get the viewpoints of the parties in question. I went searching for different minority organization leaders/members, to get their view of the problem at hand. I sent out letters to different organizations asking them to be
interviewed for this article. I have included the responses of all who replied.

The first interview I conducted was with B.U.S. (Black United Students). I talked with President Nicole Strain. Nicole sees a lack of communication and little unification among organizations. She says the smaller organizations that are in existence stemmed from B.U.S., but they are stemming so far that they cannot reach a common goal.

B.U.S. has been making plans for different community events. They would like to see other organizations work on building stronger ties. Strain mentions that she would like to see other organizations support each other’s events. They should not compete, but work with other programs when scheduling events. She states that we are the minorities, and if we can work together to target other minorities, we can bring larger audiences. B.U.S. sees a problem amongst the faculty as well. She states that they too have a bad communication problem, and that there may be some unrecognized hostility among them. B.U.S. is trying to include advisors in the creation of plans for a retreat, because they too should be in accordance with students. Strain states that she would like to see faculty members participate in dialogue to openly express their concern, and to see them have more involvement with organizations on campus. She feels they are not setting a good example: “We need them to be strong for us to be strong.”

programs and they’ve included other organizations as well. They are working on a calendar with all the organizations and are working on a black leadership retreat to focus on regaining community ties. B.U.S. would like to see the other organizations work on building stronger ties. Strain mentions that she would like to see other organizations support each other’s events. They should not compete, but work with other programs when scheduling events. She states that we are the minorities, and if we can work together to target other minorities, we can bring larger audiences. B.U.S. sees a problem amongst the faculty as well. She states that they too have a bad communication problem, and that there may be some unrecognized hostility among them. B.U.S. is trying to include advisors in the creation of plans for a retreat, because they too should be in accordance with students. Strain states that she would like to see faculty members participate in dialogue to openly express their concern, and to see them have more involvement with organizations on campus. She feels they are not setting a good example: “We need them to be strong for us to be strong.”

organizations to help sponsor some programs. In her opinion, L.A.D.I.E.S. is the first organization to go to the extent that they do, in order to work together on projects. She states that L.A.D.I.E.S. is always open to compromise. L.A.D.I.E.S. would like to see a UNITY program started, and to hold a Roundtable so that everyone knows what events are going on. L.A.D.I.E.S. feels that everyone needs to take a stand on serious issues and become serious about Oscar Ritchie Hall. Everyone needs to show more appreciation for faculty and staff and for each other.

The next organization I spoke with was B.G.S.A. (Black Graduate Student Association).

"We need them to be strong for us to be strong."

The next organization, L.A.D.I.E.S. (Ladies of Academics, Diversity, Intelligence, Excellence, and Service), represented by Vice President Adrien Williams, expressed the same sentiments as B.U.S. She feels as if most of the leaders are not motivated in the right direction. More conscious leaders are what is needed.

L.A.D.I.E.S. is trying to form a good foundation to get their name out. They are asking
to offer, as well as, to seek out what other organizations have to offer. B.G.S.A. feels that other organizations and faculty need to come out and support events. Not just “paper support,” but actual “warm body” support. She states that faculty need to give what they can, because they represent the organizations.

My next stop was with C.B.A. (Collegiate Business Association). I spoke with Secretary Adrienne Miller. Miller sees a problem with the scheduling of events. She says it’s hard to decide where to go when events are happening at the same time. She states that there isn’t enough membership amongst the organizations. The organizations need to build up their leaders and make them strong, so they can help those who aren’t. C.B.A. is also trying to form a committee including representatives from each organization so we can see what needs to be done to ease the difference.

Next I spoke with S.A.L.S.A. (Spanish And Latino Student Association). I talked with President Melissa Szoke and Secretary/ Publicist, Francisco Romero. Francisco states, in agreement with B.G.S.A., that a major problem is lack of communication. Szoke says they are trying to work together with B.U.S. in the future. They are also trying to start an organization comprised of all minority organizations. Romero states that it should not just be a black group, a Latino group, or a Jewish group, but that one combined group has a greater voice.

Szoke feels that everyone can benefit from other organizations’ experiences. Romero comments that if there is an issue in one group, they should be able to call on another group for help. He then goes on to say that everything is being done all around campus, while Oscar Ritchie is falling apart. Melissa says there are a lot of unresolved issues, not only with faculty, but also with all organizations. Romero adds that some organizations may not work with other organizations because of past presidents and it should not be that way.

Another organization I interviewed was M.A.S.A. (Minority Art Students Association). I spoke with Vice-president Keytsa Warren. Warren, like many others, feels the main problem is a lack of communication between the organizations. M.A.S.A. is trying to include other organizations in their functions and to cosponsor activities. They are trying to see what other organizations can contribute and vice versa. M.A.S.A. would like to see one meeting per semester with a spokesperson from each organization, to see what the plans are for that semester. They are going to sponsor what they call a “Think Tank,” so that students can discuss things that are going on around campus and get some answers.

Finally, as President of HARAMBEE, I would like to offer my opinion. The problem I, too, see is a lack of communication. It seems as though organizations are afraid to speak with one another. Everyone wants their name in the headlights, but they lose sight of the main objective. HARAMBEE has collaborated, compromised, and cosponsored with other organizations in the past, and plans to continue to do so in the future. HARAMBEE would like to see more support at all events. We would like to see each organization sit down to talk with one another. We have to learn how to put personality differences aside so that we can reach our main objective.

From my journey across campus, it is easy to see what the problem is and how it can be resolved. The problem seems to
be a lack of communication. Someone needs to take the initiative to talk with others. Most of the organizations have the same solution. Get everyone from each organization together and talk about it. Hopefully, in the near future, things will have changed for the better.

Can organizations come together without having a party, or a meeting motivated by some racist's acts? Maybe if everyone was handed a flier that said J.A.M. and was told it was free they would come, only to realize that J.A.M. stood for Just A Meeting. Maybe then we could all get together, instead of talking about it. Maybe we will have already taken those steps to become a more unified body by the time this article is printed. Let us make U.N.I.T.Y., UNITED.
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Who is Undergraduate Student Senate?

- **D'ANDRA MULL**
  **Executive Director**
  dmull@kent.edu
  The Executive Director is the chairperson of USS. He or she is responsible for the administrative functions of the Student Senate.

- **THOMAS SMITH**
  **Research & Development**
  tsmith4@kent.edu
  The senator for Research and Development is responsible for conducting research, polls, forums and focus groups to evaluate trends and concerns of the undergraduate student body.

- **KATIE POLICE**
  **University Affairs**
  cpolice@kent.edu
  The senator for University Affairs is responsible for coordinating all matters that deal with the university as well as coordinating the committee on committees.

- **JAMIE MARTIN**
  **Student Advancement**
  jmarti@kent.edu
  The senator for Student Advancement oversees and coordinates all areas of capital improvement projects that would benefit the undergraduate student body.

- **MICHEAL MARTENS**
  **Governmental Affairs**
  mmartens@kent.edu
  The senator for Governmental Affairs monitors all national and state legislation that may effect undergraduate students.

Get involved

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set apart from the rest of the world...
you make me oblivious to them other matters...
cuz I'm wit you... an that's all that means anything right now...
this ring right now.... lemme lay this thing down,
an lay this thing...
play this thing masterfully, like mozart classically
summoning sensual sentiments with secrecy "shhhhhhhhh"
the talk only intensifies the yearn.
The thought only intensifies the burn
and makes it harder to discern the difference between what's right,
and what's right now... the mood controls me,
and the soothing of our souls is the remedy...
I timidly take a taste of the poison and fall victim
to the flesh as I mesh trust and lust making way for the latter...
the adrenaline rushes me to attention and you feel me...
but there is no feeling, and that's the beauty of it.
Your beauty is only as deep as the skins,
so blindly I sit apart from myself and indulge in the sin...
the f*ck...
fueled by fools seeking instant access to ecstasy,
no strings attached, interest free...
touching, and touching... fondling, and caressing frantically,
impatiently grinding though the desert searching for the oasis,
thirsting... for just a taste... consumption of a mistake
we unknowingly make....
set apart in silence locked away with a prayer
that no one will ever know,
only to fear its resurfacing forever
Coming Into Orange

(dedicated to Kelly Harris)
By Athena Dixon

Resist sister
Being placed in those boxes they define for you
Dry those hot cocoa tears
But telling our blackness in words is redundant
We are Africa in action
Silenced drums beating loudly once more with this generation’s steady beat of pain
Beat Hip-Hop
Trip the light fantastic to dance away the blue times
Sweat out the emotions from repressed thoughts
And raise voices in sweet release
You've hidden too long in indigo shadows
Quieting the storm that raged inside you
Shout you lightening
Revel in your thunder
Capture you echoes to bounce off the walls of your silence
Be free
Orange has been captured for you
Take it
Yours to keep is the sunlight
Align it with your smiles and blind the world to what they’ve always thought
Entrap their minds in prisms of sunrays
Be as gentle as rain but as powerful as typhoons off shore
Move as mist on cold morns
Be poetry in motion with purpose
Teach and be taught by the lessons stored in each hour of life
It’s always been there just never noticed
Shout down to wombs with heaven’s words bringing forth nations with rhythm in their hearts and fire in their eyes
Dance among words like freedom whose mortal definitions can’t contain what it is
Feels
Represents
I wish for you to be blue letters on black backgrounds spelling self
I want you to feel jazz like breezes
And be liquid in your ways
I want you to surrender to what you are supposed to be
Speak what your gods tell you
You my sister are electric riding Jacob’s ladder onto paradise
Don’t live your life in black and white
You are so much more
Please drown in the knowledge that you are spinning the Earth with every breath you take and you make the moon glow
Remember that the sky is blue but the sun is a blaze of orange
Happy to be "NAPPY"

By Mshindi Mkataa

What exactly is "Nappy" Hair?
"Kinky" Hair,
Tightly curled,
Untouched,
Strong,
Beautiful,
My Hair.
My Hair is "Nappy" Hair.
Society wishes to tame My Hair,
Control My Hair,
Place shackles on My Hair...
Just as society has attempted to shackle My Voice;
Yet I speak,
I live on,
I continue on...My Way,
To being Black and Proud,
With my Hair "Nappy" and Wild.
Representing the Free Generation.
Because 120 degrees of Bloodshed and Struggle,
Plus 120 degrees of Consciousness,
Plus 120 degrees of Growth and Development;
Is equal to 360 degrees of Life and Freedom.
No longer do I have to imitate white society in order to be Free,
I'm able to be me,
And I choose to be "Nappy."

Love

By: Christine Howard

Love, what is love?
Is it the strange feeling in the pit of your stomach.
The yearning you feel when you are far apart.

What is love?
Is it the happiness you feel when that special person is near.
Is it the sadness you feel when they go away.

What is love?
Love is the heart throbbing when you hear his name.
The smile that appears when he comes your way.

What is love?
**I'm the BLACK Woman You Don't Want**

By Linda Cammon

My hips are wide
My strut is tuff
My lips are full
Yet it's just not enough

My hair is coarse
My eyes are keen
My breasts they're round
But with you I won't be seen

My skin shines dark
Black, brown
Red and more
My nose is strong
Characteristics straight from the African shore

But I'm the Black woman
You don't want
I'm your strength,
Your roots,
Your fire
Yes! I'm the Black Woman
You don't desire

My legs they're long
Sturdy and straight
Their arch is high
To protect treasure's gate

My back is solid
And will not bend
From the weight of rejections
From my Black men

But I'm the Black woman
You don't want
I'm your walk
Your talk
Your deep sexy eyes
Yes, I'm the Black woman you despise

Through my womb
I give you a young black nation
Full of hope
Yearning
And strong determination
With my mind

I help you to reason out
And discuss
Of why the Black man
This world distrusts

And within my soul
Lays a love sooo deep
That only a True Black Man
I know can keep

But I'm the Black Woman
You don't want
You seek her hair
Her skin
Her features blight
Yes, I'm the Black Woman
You traded in for White

**Untitled**

By Hadiyah Draper

You got who?
You got what?
Where did she come from?
You said you'd be honest
Too little, too late!
I blame myself
No...don't you feel bad
You did what you do
It's not your fault
No! Wait! It is!
I wasn't the only one there
It's cool though
You're right
Friends (ha ha)
We're cool
Keep it real
Keep it tight
I'll be okay
I'll bounce back
Or do I?
Maybe, maybe not
Time will tell
But...until...then...
Untitled (REBELLION)

By Jeff Johnson

What the f* ck?
When did warrior kings become whimpering cowards?
When did these awe-inspiring queens become simple-minded whores?
Why is there such disdain for all that is righteous and worthy of sacrifice?
Here we are, the ruins of a great civilization
Lynched by gold and platinum chains and whipped by materialistic obsessions
African-Americans
Where has the African gone?
Where has that fire of rebellion gone?
So in love with your masters you cry when you hear the National Anthem
God bless Ameribka?
Would such a divine entity waste his blessings here?
We are hunted by police
We are caged by the judicial system
And our President is thirsty to execute us
Niggas
You were so busy trying to f* ck everything that moves you have failed
Failed in your duty as provider and protector
A nation of weak-minded, weak willed failures
You act like Martin Luther was the only king
You act like Malcolm and Huey and Edgar never existed
They too resisted
House niggas
In love with master
Some of you loved Gore
Some of you love Bush
All of you love the devil
As his finger lingers on the button ready to feed the glutton known as government
You are still being sold and traded
Your soul has been sold and traded
Traded for cars and houses and degrees and other inconsequential bullshit
I'm a field Negro
Awaiting my opportunity to loose these chains
And escape this pain and change the game so only the strong remain
The revolution will not be televised or telephoned or over the Internet or in a newspaper
It will be in the souls of rebels
Niggas choose what side you'll be on
We kings and queens will swing God's sword
By Chanelle Cox

"Ill-type for Life"

At the age when most teenagers are discovering the opposite sex, dreaming of a driver's license, and flipping hamburgers after school to save up for a new video game, Gregory Morrison was starting his own business.

Gregory Morrison, who is currently a junior Radio and Television major at Kent State University, was fourteen years old when he started his own business called Ill-Type Studio/Records.

"During this time I knew a lot of people who wanted to be rappers and they were paying a lot of money for studio time, so I immediately saw it as a business opportunity. You never hear a rapper rapping acapella."

Morrison's parents thought that this venture was just a phase he was going through and initially didn't take him very seriously.

"One of the hardest parts of starting this business was knowing this was what I really wanted to do, and not having people taking me seriously."

"I used to scream 'Ill-Type for Life' in the hallways of my high school."

Studio equipment is very expensive and Morrison was barely old enough to work when Ill-Type began.

"I started out with a Casio keyboard and a boom box. When I listen to some of the music I used to make, I just shake my head. I still have that boom box. It keeps me grounded and reminds me of how far I've come."

Morrison released his first album "Eye of the Storm" in 1998. The album was a compilation of some of the work that was produced at Ill-Type Studios.

"'Eye of the Storm' wasn't what I wanted it to be, but you have to start somewhere."

Ill-Type had its first show in November 1999 at Kent State University.

"Only about fifty people showed up to that show, but the show still went on. The people who were there said they really enjoyed it."

In Spring 2000, Morrison gave it another shot and was very successful. Ill-Type and Black United Students sponsored the First Annual Hip-Hop Day at Kent State University. More than 250 people came to see hip-hop acts from Pittsburgh, Detroit and Cleveland.


"We sold most of 'The Foundation' at local record stores in Cleveland and at Randall Park Mall."

"Ill-type for Life"
"I walked around the mall with a Discman and asked people if they wanted to listen to the CD and that is how we sold a lot of copies."

Morrison is currently in the process of totally revamping "The Foundation" and is also thinking about doing a pure jazz CD.

"This is a business. You have to do it for the money or you won't survive. You can't tell creditors that you want to pay them with your love of music."

Morrison said he has to keep up with a lot of things besides music to stay in business.

"I have to research the legalities of the business, copyrights, publishing rights. I had to learn how to be a manager, a promoter, a graphic designer and all I wanted to do was to produce."

Morrison, who owns over $10,000 worth of studio equipment, said he also has to keep up with the technological changes of the business.

"Software changes frequently and I have no choice but to keep up."

Morrison said that there are times that he gets discouraged, but he gets a lot of support from his parents, friends, artist Marlo "Lo-Down" Bloysen and his little brother.

"Sometimes I make a beat and I ask my little brother if he likes it. He listens to a lot of mainstream hip-hop and knows what kinds of things he and his friends like to listen to."

Morrison believes that good production makes an album.

"A sorry rapper will sell records if the songs have good beats, but the best rapper will have a hard time selling records with mediocre producing."

Morrison's long term goal is to make it big time as a producer and to do this for a living.

"Ill-Type is pioneering the game for this area. You don't get a lot of support in Ohio until you go national."

It has been six years since a 14-year-old Gregory Morrison screamed "Ill-Type For Life" in the hallways of his high school. Now the 20-year-old Morrison is screaming "Ill-Type For Life" to the world.
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AIDS in the Black Community

By Ikhlas Asadi

**Her story:**

Carlatta was 21 years old when she found out that she had contracted the HIV virus.

"I don't really know how I contracted the disease. I had always been careful and used condoms with most of my partners. I say most because there are always the guys who claim they don't feel comfortable wearing them, or that they love you and aren't messing around with anyone else. Obviously, most of the time just wasn't enough.

The thing is, I never even knew that there was anything wrong. That is, until my fiancé became really sick and was diagnosed as having AIDS. I never thought to get tested, and he trusted me. I was the first person he had ever slept with, but I'd had at least 12 partners before him. When he was diagnosed I immediately went to get tested, and found out that I was HIV positive. But they couldn't tell me exactly how long I had been that way.

Jason was 20 when I met him, and 22 when he was diagnosed. I was 19 when we met. I still haven't shown any symptoms of having the disease, but his illness took effect pretty quickly. I'm hoping that we will be able to get married at some point, but he is not responding to the medication very well and is only getting worse. Our only real hope is that they find something that can slow down the process. I feel guilty knowing that I did this to him. We were so happy and I never thought anything like this could happen. His family blames me and wants nothing to do with me, but Jason says that he loves me and forgives me. If only I had been tested."

**His story:**

Greg found himself completely alone after finding out that he had been diagnosed with AIDS.

"I was 19 when I was diagnosed as having AIDS. I was with my girlfriend at the time. She had no idea that I was bisexual and had been cheating
on her with my best friend. My parents just wanted to see me settle down with a nice girl. There was no way I could tell them that I was interested in men. I knew my best friend had some guys that he liked to be with on occasion, but they seemed pretty cool and harmless. I guess you can really never tell.

When I started getting sick my girlfriend insisted that I see a doctor. When he gave the AIDS diagnosis my girlfriend immediately became offensive and asked me where I had been. I told her about the relationship I'd had with my best friend. She couldn't believe it. She walked out on me the next day.

My friend stopped calling. He said that he refused to get tested and that I had to have gotten it from somewhere else. But I know that I got it from him.”

Know the Facts:

- The impact of AIDS on the African American community has been devastating

- By 1999 the Center for Disease Control had received reports of 733,374 AIDS cases — of those, 272,881 occurred among African Americans.

- African Americans represented only 12% of the total U.S. population in 1999, but made up almost 37% of all AIDS cases reported in this country.

- 1 in 50 African American men is infected with HIV.

- 1 in 160 African American women is infected with HIV.

- In 1999 more African American AIDS cases were reported than any other ethnic group.

- Almost 2/3 (63%) of all cases reported among women in 1999 were African American.

- The rate of reported cases in 1999 among African American men was 66 per 100,000 population. More than 2 times greater than the rate for Hispanics, and 8 times greater than the rate for whites.

- African American Adult/Adolescent men: Since the epidemic began, men who have sex with men represent the largest proportion (37%) of reported cases. The second most exposed category is injection drug use (34%). And heterosexual exposure accounts for 8% of cumulative cases.

- African American Adult/Adolescent women: Since the epidemic began, injection drug use accounted for 42% of all
reported cases with 38% due to heterosexual contact.

- Substance abuse is fueling the sexual spread of HIV in the U.S., especially in minority communities with high rates of STDs. Women to women cases are rare, but do exist.

- AIDS is the leading cause of death among African Americans ages 25 to 44 years. In this group, AIDS accounts for 1 of 3 deaths among African American males, and 1 of 5 deaths among African American women.

**Protect yourself:**

- Abstinence and condoms are still the best methods of protection against the transmission of HIV and other STDs.

- Protect against and treat STDs as a form of HIV prevention.

- Oral sex can serve as a means of transmitting the HIV virus. Vaginal secretions and menstrual blood may carry the virus. (The likelihood of occurrence is rare.)

*For more information, visit*  
www.cdc.gov/hiv
The Pan-African Faculty and Staff Association

Kent State University

“...Working to Assure Equal Educational & Employment Opportunities for All Pan-Africans!”

Formed in 1972, the association continues to promote better communication and interaction among the Pan-African faculty and staff, and their increased involvement in the academic and socio-cultural affairs of Kent State University, especially as they relate to black student enrollment, retention and graduation.

PAF&SA cannot be effective on this campus without the full participation of our Pan-African students. Student participation in PAF&SA can help bring about meaningful contact between Pan-African colleagues and students.

The association meets on the last Thursday of each month of the academic year, September through May. The standard time for these meetings is noon, in the Lecture Hall of Department of Pan-African Studies.

SEE YOU THERE!

PAF&SA Executive Board
Fihankra:
Security in the House
(Edited Version) By Mwatabu Okantah

Healing.
Atonement.
Reconciliation.
Purification.
Bitterness, anger, frustration and our pain have turned us in on ourselves. Because we live in a material society that has lost touch with the real world of the spirit, we are a people in need of spiritual healing today. We have struggled so hard, and for so long, to be accepted as equals in this society that we have become more American than the Americans in some very dangerous ways. In our centuries old efforts to become Americans, we have somehow lost touch with our true sense of ourselves as a unique people of African descent living in American.

Niggers and Sambos: what happens to a people when they are reduced to believing in caricatures of themselves? In real terms, we can not enter into genuine dialogue with others if we do not enter into serious dialogue with all of our fragmented and fractured selves. On December 9th, 1994, an African-centered spiritual process of purification and healing was begun in Ghana that heralded the potential for new beginnings and set a new course for our forward march into the 1st century. More then three thousand people participated in the inaugural “Fihankra Ceremony of a Stool and Skin,” performed in Accra as part of Panafest ’94.

Fihankra is a term from the Akan language of the Ashanti people of Ghana. It refers to one of the Adinkra symbols. According to Dr. J.B. Danquah, “The word Adinkra derives from the Akan nkra or nkara meaning ‘message or intelligence,’ and where human destiny or the life span is concerned, it refers particularly to the intelligence or message which each soul takes with him from God upon obtaining leave to depart to Earth. The soul itself is called okra or okara.” The implication, then, is that Adinkra symbols have a theological and philosophical basis. Each symbol represents a philosophical concept arising out of the Akan people’s rich cultural heritage. Fihankra signifies the “concept of completeness and indivisibility.” It means “a house which is safe” or “security in the house.” The circle is regarded as the “aboriginal symbol of the perfection of God, for like God, the circle has no beginning and thus no end.” The Creator, Nyame, is therefore the All in All. Both the Stool and Skin are sacred symbols of divine authority in which resides the very spirit and soul of the people.

This traditional Fihankra purification ceremony was also significant because it marked the first time that contemporary African chiefs had gathered publicly to formally acknowledge and to specifically perform rituals to atone for the misdeeds of those ancestors who collaborated with Europeans. They collaborated to capture and eventually sell their own people into enslavement in what came to be known as the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Present day Ghana, then known as the Gold Coast, was a major point of demarcation for the export of African captives for the New World. European traders negotiated agreements with African rulers, and were permitted to build more than forty slaving castles or barracoons along Ghana’s coast. The Stool and Skin, two sacred symbols in one, of the Fihankra Ceremony, were intended to restore Africans born in the Diaspora cultural and spiritual ties that have been denied to us for so long. The ceremony was a sign that Africans in African see the need to reach out across the Atlantic to reconnect with peoples of African descent living in the Diaspora as we struggle to reclaim a sense of our African heritage.

It is more than fitting that this purification ritual is
performed in Ghana, Land of Osagefo Kwame Nkrumah. It is the modern home of Pan-Africanism on the continent. It is the land where W.E.B. Dubois laid his “double consciousness” to rest. A significant African-American repatriate community has been active in Ghana ever since the heady days of independence. And because of the presence of Cape Coast and Elmina castles, Ghana has become a major destination for African-American pilgrims who feel the need to travel to our ancestral homeland. A delegation from Ghana visited the United States during the summer of 1995 to follow-up and to bring this ritual process of the Purification of Fihankra to those people who could not be in Ghana for the historic inaugural ceremony. They came under the theme “Fihankra: Reuniting The Divided House.” Led by Odeneho Nana Oduro Numapau II, they were in Cleveland from July 25th through July 28th, 1995, where I had the opportunity to meet them and participate in the ceremony itself. Unfortunately, the Cleveland leg of their tour became embroiled in controversy. Serious questions were raised about the delegation’s credentials and its motives. Because I had been asked to speak as one of the Griots that evening, long time community activists with broad experiences in Africa implored me to speak to their concerns.

The delegation also traveled to Detroit, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington D.C. At the time, a second Fihankra ceremony was planned for later that same year and a second U.S. tour was proposed. On the one hand, little seems to have come out of Fihankra. The Cleveland Fihankra Committee was in the hands of people who had no real understanding of African heritage or contemporary African realities. A few dubious people received equally dubious titles. Well-respected community activists in attendance were alarmed. Even giving the organizers the proverbial “benefit of the doubt,” it was clear that good intentions don’t make up for ignorance or our general lack of cultural awareness. The Fihankra delegation had no real sense of the depth of African-American ambivalence and anxiety about our connection to Africa and Africans. Africans and African-Americans coming together in mutual ignorance is a volatile mix. This very real quandary speaks to the enormous obstacle blocking the path before us. On the other hand, however, Africans from Africa and African-Americans reaching out to touch each other across age-old barriers of time, distance, fear, and mistrust is the right path. It is the way of our ancestors. On both sides of the Atlantic, the lesson of Fihankra is learning how to do things in the right way. The idea of Fihankra offers the potential to open forever that once closed Door of No Return.

From the vantage point of the year 2001, we can look back
on W.E.B. DuBois’ THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK to see that he was correct. The problem of the 20th century was indeed the color line. “The relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and African, in America and the islands of the sea” has been the major issue of our time. In many ways, the 20th century signaled an African world renaissance. In the larger, so-called Third World, anti-colonist and anti-imperialist resistance literally forced a shift in the European-dominated modern world’s racial paradigm. In the United States, the Civil Rights/Black Liberation movements forced this same paradigm shift into stark America terms. For me, the Fihankra ceremony had meaning because I saw the delegation’s efforts within the context of the awakening throughout the Pan-African world. We cannot view Fihankra through the limiting sight of American eyes. Being in America has stunted our growth and blurred our vision. As an idea, we must not limit Fihankra to only those people who were aware back in 1994 and 1995. We must all realize that our slow movement toward a true African centered consciousness is a more demanding and difficult journey than most of us realize. If we are to achieve a genuine African-centered consciousness, we must also realize the degree to which traditional African thought patterns and cultural practices will require profound and substantial changes in our individual and group thinking. Traditional African group thinking. It will require hard changes in our behavior and outlook. Traditional African culture is what it is, not what we in our American confusion would like it to be.

We must begin to see how the tragic history of race relations in this society has fundamentally molded the collective American consciousness. As African-Americans, We have been no less homogenized. Yet, the relations between Americans of European, Indigenous, African and Asian extraction have defined and shaped the American experience in ways that will continue to confound white America’s hallowed melting pot mythology. It is no longer deniable that the face of just who is considered an American is changing. So-called people of color as a force to be reckoned with in this society, are a reality that is not going to fade away. Some time during the 21st century, those people who call themselves white will no longer be the majority population in America. America’s military might as the world’s lone remaining superpower will not alter this fact. No amount of legislation declaring English as the official spoken language of this country can stop the inevitability that Spanish will become the most widely spoken language in this society. The reality of a changing world is fast becoming the reality of a changing America. Denial of these truths is the problem in this nation today. As Americans

“We must begin to see how the tragic history of race relations in this society has fundamentally molded the collective American consciousness.”
of African descent, these truths have particular implications for our future. Unfortunately, we may be deeper in denial than anyone else facing a changing American reality.

The true scope of Fihankra is larger than just those people who were in Ghana for the inaugural ceremony in 1994 or those people in the cities in the United States, which the Fihankra delegation visited in 1995. As Americans of African descent, we must begin to see ourselves and our experience as part of a global Pan-African experience. Fihankra must be viewed in African-centered cultural terms where ritual and ceremony is designed to integrate and renew the entire community of the departed, the living and the not yet born. As we enter the 21st century, we must begin to understand that being African has less to do with geographical location or one’s origins of birth, than it does with nature and condition of both our individual and our collective inner “good and gentle character,” or what the Yoruba people of Nigeria call “Iwa-Pele.” For the Yoruba, each individual’s life is a quest (“Iwa-Kiri) to develop Iwa-Pele. In the same regard, this thing we call Blackness is more than just the color of one’s skin. It is about our state of consciousness as a people. It is an attitude. Blackness is a way of seeing and a way of being in the world.

Like the annual Kwanzaa celebration, the Fihankra Ceremony of a Stool and Skin must be part of our ongoing struggle to create new rituals and ceremonies in our lives. Writing in his book, RITUAL: POWER, HEALING, AND COMMUNITY, Malidoma Patrice Some writes, “We need ritual because it is an expression of the fact that we recognize the difficulty of creating a different and special kind of community. A community that doesn’t have…ritual cannot exist.” He suggests the way to know that your rituals are having a positive effect on you begins with the discovery of how much emotion is pushing you from the inside like a volcano. Those who are able to express their emotions have been, at some point in their lives in alignment with their own spirits, saints, guides or guardians.” Fihankra, then, is about our realignment inside an African-centered universe no matter where we find ourselves domiciled on the planet. And, for those of us who still wonder about our relationship to African and Africans, Fihankra is living testament to the fact that we have not been forgotten in our ancestral homeland. Here in the Diaspora, we are African people still.

The stain of disruption, dispersal, enslavement and colonialism continues to fester like an open wound in the consciousness of African people on both sides of the Atlantic. Fihankra is for all of us as African-derived peoples. The 20th century, indeed, signaled a true renaissance in the African/Pan-African world. The Fihankra Purification Ceremony is part of our movement out of white darkness into black light. The theme of “Fihankra: Reuniting The Divided House” is about Africans at home reaching back across the New World. Sankofa is an Adinkra symbol that expresses the concept of reclaiming one’s history. If we continue to reach out to each other from points of view steeped in mutual arrogance, greed, and deceit, our outstretched hands will never make the desired contact. Nations, like individual and groups of individuals, can also be in need of healing. For too long, we have tried to convince others of truths we did not necessarily believe ourselves. Fihankra is about believing in our capacity to be healed. It is about embracing our reality as African people at home and abroad. It is about bringing final closure to a sad chapter in our history as peoples of African descent. Its is about finally attaining a true sense of tranquility and completeness within our black selves.
When I was originally given the opportunity to gain insight into the Black/White female relationship I became very anxious. I wanted to go out and talk to people in order to finally get into the open some of the hang-ups women on this campus possess. Being an Afrikan woman in America myself, I decided to pose questions to white women that I thought would spark conversation and/or debate. To my surprise, when I asked the question “Do you feel there is tension between Black women and White women?” their responses were no. It was explained to me that they got along with the Black women they knew and could not speak for others. Out of the women I spoke to, none would admit to what I believed in my heart existed.

So I flipped the script on them and asked those same women a different set of questions. Instead of asking if tension existed, I asked if they felt Kent
State University promoted good relations between the races. I asked this because Kent prides itself on being diverse. Immediately, the response was the diversity requirement. Kent makes it mandatory to take a diversity course. When asked what course they used to fill the requirement, I got a “diverse” group of answers, ranging from “Intro To Ethics” to “Music as a World Phenomenon” to nothing at all (under certain catalogs this requirement doesn’t exist). However no one mentioned “Black Experience”, “The Black Woman”, “Latino Studies” or “Native American Studies”. I became curious and asked why not? Many answered that it didn’t fit into their schedule or they didn’t feel it was necessary.

I asked them “How much do you know about other women outside your ethnic group?” They knew very little, while at the same time holding strong to their statements about the lack of importance it was to them. How can there be no tension between the women on this campus when these are the views that some hold? How can one truly have a relationship with another if they know not who the other is? What do you see when you look into the mirror? They said women. I see an Afrikan woman, a Seminole woman, a Puerto Rican woman. Why? Because that’s who I am.

This society is not color-blind and it is evident in the manner in which women (people) of color are treated. I was asked, “Why should we take courses on you, when there are no courses on us?” Correct me if I’m wrong, but the last time I checked the curriculum at this University for the most part reflected them. I do not see myself or other non-white groups being represented in the majority of the Philosophy classes, History classes, English classes and so on. I began to rethink those women’s responses to my initial question and came to the conclusion they are right. There is no tension between black women and white women until Black women want to be respected or when White women are asked to step out of that “white is right” comfort zone that this society has placed them in. Ignorance is bliss, but knowing is also staggering. It’s a cycle that can only be broken with the acquisition of knowledge.

Ignorance is bliss, but knowing is also stagnating. It’s a cycle that can only be broken with the acquisition of knowledge.
PHILOSOPHY:
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Enrollment Management & Student Affairs
From Africa Bambatta to Jay Z, hip-hop has transcended from an urban outlet and way of voicing your opinion into a multimedia extravaganza. With many artists viewing hip-hop as a means to get paid, the art form is frequently overshadowed by alphabetized and numerical luxury items.

BY CHRISTOPHER PATTERSON
These items are portrayed as the status symbols of the culture. Along those same lines you have a divide in hip-hop, the so-called “underground heads” and the “mainstream cats.” In this article I will explore both worlds and give insight into why one dislikes the other, then offer a means of compromise.

The dictionary defines the term underground as an “avant-garde movement or its films, publications, and art, usually privately produced and of special appeal, and often concerned with social or artistic experiment.” Now, the “underground” hip-hop artist deals with the same topics and interests as the “mainstream” artist but is heard on a smaller scale. Even though both are basically talking about the same thing, people still have negative ideas about the “underground” artist. I conducted a survey and found that opponents to the “underground” scene felt the artists try to be too deep with their lyrics, and sometimes people don’t understand or want to understand what is being said. Also, the beats aren’t tight and laced with enough bass to make people move at the club. One must realize that their music is designed for you to listen to the lyrics while the beats simply move you through, not the other way around. Some people even say the “underground” artists are mad because they aren’t making a lot of money and envy the “mainstream” artists. Are these things true? It’s up to you to decide. But remember, we’re trying to come up with a compromise for both sides. Speaking of both sides, the dictionary defines the term “mainstream” as the “prevailing current or direction of activity or influence.”

“Mainstream” hip-hop is to many the only hip-hop on the market because of the exposure it gets on the radio and television. But if you fall into this category, realize there is much more out there. No one is to blame for this, because royalties are the way every artist gets paid, aside from live shows. However, there are critics who claim that since “mainstream” artists have more exposure, they are sellouts. They have had to alter themselves in a way that appeals to a more general audience, instead of relating more to hip-hop’s original message. There are some artists who have conformed, but most artists have stayed true to themselves. Another criticism is that “mainstream” artists seem to talk only about what they have in their garages, and how they have frostbite from all of the ice they have on. Furthermore, they are constantly talking about sex and how they can move this and work that.

Hence, trying to come to a compromise may seem difficult. First, you must realize where hip-hop originated, not necessarily in the Bronx or Queens (though there is an ongoing debate over that issue), but from people dealing with the pressures of life and trying to survive (Grandmaster Flash and the Furious 5). They realized that without working together as a people we would never move beyond our oppressed conditions (The West Coast All Stars song with “All in the same gang”, and a collaboration of East Coast artists’ song, entitled “Self Destruction”). The forefathers of hip-hop realized that this media, hip-hop, could bring certain things to the forefront.

So goes hip-hop, the music that has broken down cultural barriers and invaded all parts of the globe. That’s a lot of power, y’all. Hip-hop has overwhelming control over our youth, whether from Topeka, Kansas; Tokyo, Japan; Florence, Italy; or Brooklyn, New York. Ultimately, with its power hip-hop has
changed, and will continue to change, the face of many societies. But we have to know and understand what to do with the power.

Initially the music must be able to overpower people with its message, but not so deeply that an average person would drown. Also, the message would have to be somewhat subliminal and catching, so that after people leave the club or turn off their radios, they recognize what the artist was trying to say. On occasion people find themselves dancing to a song that they would not normally listen to, but they dance anyway. For example, when you’re at the club and the song “Put it in Your Mouth” comes on, you run your monkey butt to the dance floor. If the song describes you, well, more power to ya. But if it doesn’t, keep your ass in your seat or at the bar, thank you.

Artists must realize what they are telling people because they are the “Pied Piper” and we are the mice; recognize.

Hip-hop is a way of expressing how one feels about, and how one deals with, certain situations. Realize that we have been blessed with hip-hop as a means to inform people, we should not abuse or take advantage of it. Reflection Eternal said it best: “We don’t live for hip hop, hip hop lives for us.” We build it, we mold it, and make it work. So to the artists out there, whether you’re “mainstream,” “underground,” or just being yourself, realize that you have the power to move something (society and its views), so damn it, move it.
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