Power to the prezidents
An interview with sticman of dead prez.

I Say I AM
Rosa Clemente claims her place in the African Diaspora.

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UHURU
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EDITOR’S NOTES

Welcome to Leftology. This is where consciousness is going to be shaken and discourse begins. In this issue of Uhuru we are attempting to give the reader a different perspective, contrary to the ones they may have been given through the media, in their history books, or even their places of worship. In this issue, we will be taking on different historical, religious, political and philosophical viewpoints, each contribution being a piece that could stand alone without the support of the others.

The current views and ideas of society need to be challenged. No positive change has come about without the proper amount of rabblerousing by a minority of critical thinkers. They are willing to come under persecution by what Einstein referred to as “mediocre minds.”

Without the introduction of new ideas, or even the reintroduction of old ones from a new and different perspective, progress can never take place. Such challengers are featured on the following pages, and these challengers are no more than ordinary people with extraordinary perspectives. That is to say that each of us can aspire to the “Leftological” approaches to reality of these individuals. Anthropophotjournalist, Wayne B. Chandler; activist and essayist, Rosa Clemente; and legendary Black Panther Party founder, Bobby Seale, are among the phenomenal individuals featured for your intellectual fulfillment.

Leftology is about different and new ideas that can challenge the status quo into creating a more functional and fair world for all of us. Please read everything contained within these pages carefully, meditate on what is written, and do your own research in order to confirm or challenge what is contained herein. It is cliché to say that a revolution is needed, but it is truthful to say that one is needed for our minds.

Editor, UHURU Magazine
"It's Bigger Than Hip-Hip," the message coined by dead prez on its 2000 album release entitled, *Let's Get Free*. The powerful group, consisting of sticman and M-1, are two revolutionaries, who are inspired by legendary rap groups like Public Enemy, self defense parties like the Black Panthers and civil rights' leaders such as Malcolm X. Their lyrics mostly focus on the fundamentals of life and broadening perspectives in today's society.

Jason "Jboogie" Betts, senior communications major, sat down to converse with sticman of dead prez before a concert. Though M-1 wasn't present that night, the interview with sticman grants insight on his thoughts of a variety of topics.

**Jboogie:** Let me open by asking what new music material are you all currently working on?

**sticman:** Right now we're working on our new album called *Walk Like a Warrior*, coming out on some damn record label near you. We are in the process of figuring out what new plantation we will get sucked into, but it's a continuation of *Let's Get Free*. We just took it down south.

**Jboogie:** Some people would call your music the soundtrack of the Black experience. How do you feel about that?

**sticman:** That's a big statement right there. It's definitely the experience of our life, being Black. Black people have so much shit in common, especially with our condition that we live in. I think it's good that music can draw people's attention to the same thing. For us, it's important to know that it's not just music. It's music where we strive to be a participant in an organized way, in the community, in our defense, whether it's politically, socially, culturally and legally or whatever it might be.

"We are prisoners because we have to fear that some pack of wild guns carrying pigs can harass, beat, jail or kill us at any moment."
Working in the prison system, training martial arts, we are trying to develop special ways to strengthen our position.

Jboogie: After the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the government passed the Patriot Act, where anyone opposing the government or having terrorist-characteristics could possibly be monitored by the government. How do you all feel about the passing of the act?

sticman: I would say it takes one to know one. America was started by terrorist acts against the indigenous people, against African people and against the Caribbean. Terrorism established all that shit. It's been legal for Black people to be on the Patriot Act, being stopped and frisked in the street. If you are more than three deep, you're considered a gang.

Sept. 11 brought that shit to crackers because Black people have always been living like the way they're trying to treat the Palestinian people or the so-called Muslims or Arabs. This is the same people who tried to call the Black Panther Party a terrorist threat. It is obvious that this country was organized around denying us our rights, and the Black Panthers and groups like that were standing up for our civil rights.

But they were considered terrorist threats. So I think it's obvious who the real terrorist is. We pointed out that the terrorist is the police in the Black community. They and Giuliani in New York is worse than Bin Laden and the Taliban.

Jboogie: How do you feel about the United States involvement over in the Middle East?

sticman: That a deep situation because those are some old issues. I'm kind of reluctant to give an opinion because the information is coming from the motherf----- crackers. I don't think they have no solidarity with either side. I think it's only about pimping the situation with them.

It's obvious that Israel is an oppressive regime over the Palestinians. They have the superior military power, and they have the backing from the United States. The Palestinians are considering themselves the oppressed people, and they have a right to their own self-government and so forth. They are doing whatever they have to do to make that point heard, and what we are getting is the military version of that.

I think that the United States' only interest in the region is the oil. Politically, they have interest in uniting with the Jewish motherf----- . I think that they are using our ignorance as a people, like this is about securing America or some shit.
America is the bully. It is a threat to people all around the world, because you're not going to have people strapping themselves up with bombs if it wasn't out of desperation. And if you have to die, then take 30 with you. That's people fighting out of desperation. They don't want that issue to be discussed because they know that Black people have a lot in common with the way Palestinian people are being treated.

On a surface level, I don't claim to know all the ins and outs of everything that's going on over there. Only through my experience as a Black person can I relate to the position that the Palestinian people are in.

Jboogie: As a marketing representative for your record label, Loud, I heard a sample song called “We Need a Revolution,” which replicated the beat from Aaliyah's, “We Need a Resolution.” In the song, you made the quote, “What I have to do, snatch a beat from Timberland to appeal to you?” Can you explain this concept?

Sticman: First of all, we do what we do. Secondly, from what we experienced from Let's Get Free is that crackers have pigeon-holds, slots, classifications or categories on what they want your shit to, so that they can control it and maintain it to the divisions to the way things is right now. So you can come out and be positive, conscious or whatever you want to call it, just as long as they can put your ass in that category and have you touring white colleges. You're in a tight little nice place, where they can make money, and it's safe. I realized that by the way they did us.

I was like, how in the f--- is D.P. on this tour? How we end up over here? Why can't we go to the hood? And they would say that the hood is feeling Jay-Z right now, or the hood is this. And, I was like in my hood n----- boom Jay-Z, but the police be f----- with n-----. Y'all don't see that they make Jay-Z the representatives of the hood and make it look like n----- be partying all day. That's only a fraction as to what's really going on.

What we try to do is communicate that in a way that you hear in our music. We use our own discretions as to what tours we'll do, what association we have; we're very conscious of that. It's not like we want to perform with crackers, but the main thing is to have support from the group that we're dealing with. There's no way we would let D.P. be on a Lollapalooza Tour and shit. Like the Roots or De La Soul and groups like them, no disrespect to them, but, we have an agenda.

That's based off building structure in the hood, and we're banging for that shit. The same way n----- bang for red, bang for blue, we bang for freedom. That's our duty. That's a campaign that we're trying to build. It's going to take people to see our vision to make this come true.

Jboogie: What groups could you tour with that would fit dead prez's agenda?

Sticman: Again, no disrespect to groups like the Roots, Common and different people because I know them, and they are some cool people. It ain't really anyone I could put my finger on because it's so scarce between real shit and trying to build shit in the community. If you say something constructive, they will try to put you on a vote campaign. If you say something that's bout it, they want to put you on a strip-club campaign.

I like a lot of shit. I like Bone Thugs and Trick Daddy. I like a lot of shit that the community is relating to. A lot of n----- that we wanted to link with, the government don't kill them. Tupac, he was a good case of coming from the streets and doing something and not just talking shit.

Jboogie: Since you mentioned Tupac, tell me about your visit to Africa and the Tupac and Biggie gangs that formed over in South Africa.

Sticman: South Africa wasn't what I thought traditional Africa was supposed to be like. South Africa was real colonized in terms of modern technology. You can see the plush white empire in Africa. You can see the difference in social status because from where that guy is sitting across the room, you would see homeless motherf------, and over here would be giant mansions and shit. To see that in my homeland is just a wake-up call.

In the hood or the shant, they call them squat-ter camps, and all around the camp area, you would see some shant doors with either Biggie's or Tupac's name on the door. They divided themselves as to what they think is a war that's going on over here in the Black community, and they basing this shit off ignorance. Motherf------ are getting shot, assassinated, stuffed up and little kids getting their feet cut off. Bottom line is that these people are oppressed by these white motherf------. It ain't got anything to do with Tupac or Biggie. That's just the easy way of explaining it. Tupac and Biggie are symbols, and white folks got them in desperate situations.
Celibacy in 2003?

By Tamia R. Harris
Guest Columnist

Today, sexuality plays a major role in the functions of society. Sex is used to sell shampoo, cars, weight loss pills and many other unrelated products. With the current openness and acceptance of sex and sexuality, disease and unwanted pregnancies are also common in today’s society.

Responding to these penalties of sex, many have tried to remain abstinent while unmarried. Abstinence and celibacy are often used synonymously. More often than not, the interchange of these words is somewhat inappropriate. Celibacy has a spiritual component that is not necessarily a characteristic of abstinence.

As a Christian woman, dealing with sexuality is not easy. The decision to live a life of celibacy is challenged by society daily. Celibacy, in its true Christian form, is not done because of fear of disease and children but because of a desire to follow the command of God. Celibacy is a way of preserving your body as a sacrifice to the Lord. In the Bible, Corinthians 6:19 says “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, whom you have received from God.”

Celibacy is one of the most difficult Christian rules to follow. However, when I think of the consequences of premarital sex, the displeasing of my God is what keeps me focused. Therefore, I have found it much easier to remove myself from compromising situations. The eternal love of God is much more appealing to me than any potential love that may or may not ever develop. I have faith that God will honor my submission to His will. I believe that the husband that God has chosen for me will be well worth the wait.

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Martial arts usually bring thoughts of Bruce Lee in the final fight scene of *Enter the Dragon*, or remind us of bald Buddhist monks, breaking logs over their arms and legs and bending swords with their throats.

Surely though, images of Africans performing self-defense techniques and breathing exercises aren’t common. Over the past centuries, Chinese and Japanese men and women have become the most eminent and recognized for martial arts. However, Black martial artists like Wayne Chandler are working to alter this misconception.

Chandler, a Capoeirista (practitioner of the Brazilian martial art, Capoeira) and anthropophotographer in Cleveland, has practiced martial arts since 1979. Chandler is well known in the Pan-
African community for his extensive research on subject matters such as Moorish occupation of Spain, Egyptian philosophy and history and the African presence in early Asia. With that, his research has produced evidence of the African origins of martial arts.

According to Chandler, the first record of a martial (combative) science is found in ancient Kemet (Egypt’s name of antiquity). This science was an art called Ku-Ta, meaning defender of the pharaoh. By 3000 B.C., this martial knowledge was exposed and taught to the ancient Elamites and the Akkadians, who eventually founded the first Chinese dynasties. Soon after, the ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) fighting art, Ku-Ta, evolved into the Chinese art, Kuntao, meaning way of the fist. Later, Kuntao filtered into the Philippines and is now practiced in many schools along with Filipino arts, such as Silat, which is an empty-hand fighting art, and Kali, an art that emphasizes fighting with short sticks and knives.

Many claim martial arts began with the northern Chinese Buddhist monastery and was made popular by countless Kung-Fu movies and Wu-Tang Clan rap songs. However Indian Buddhist monk Bodhidharma, known to the Chinese as Da-Mo, does not appear in Chinese history until centuries after the first dynasties were established.

Chandler explains that all martial sciences of antiquity are just part of an entire science of living, for which traditional Africans are famous.

“Spirituality is the basis of all martial traditions,” he says. And emphasis is placed on “how to use life-force as an expression of power.”

The principles of breath control for energy cultivation did not start with Chinese Taiji or Indian Yoga. These principles can be traced to the Nile Valley region, specifically Kemet, and are found in the practices of Hermetic philosophy, an ancient Kemetic philosophical system. This energy or life force cultivation produces the knowledge that leads to the martial systems that are still used today—not just in Asia, but also over the entire world.

There are a large number of African martial arts. Chandler lists many of these arts and their similar Eastern and Western counterparts:
**Jirilbu** - A martial art from Central, West Africa, emphasizes grappling and throwing. This art is similar in technique to Japanese Jiu-jitsu or Judo.

**Jakadi** - A Central African martial art emphasizing various hand techniques and strikes, with some kicking. Several different apparatuses are used for hand techniques, with flows like Filipino martial arts, such as Kali.

**Somo** - This martial art is practiced in Central Africa and has beginner level techniques that are identical to Capoeira, a Brazilian martial art used by enslaved Africans to fight against their rifle bearing captors. Capoeira and Somo have dance-like motions combined with fierce kicks and acrobatic moves.

**Ijala** - A stick fighting art of the Ijala, warrior class of the Yoruba of Nigeria and Benin, is comparable to the stick fighting of Filipino arts, Arnis, Kali and Escrima.
Additionally there are hybrid arts created by African people in the United States that are based on Asian and African combat science as well as African cosmology integrated into their meditations and breath-control techniques.

One such art is Kupigana Ngumi—an art based on the Kemetic philosophical principles and the Asian martial arts the Progenitors practice.

Next Ta-Marrien boxing, created by Kilindi Iyi. He holds yearly martial arts training camps in Ghana. Chandler describes him as “an amazing martial artist, probably one of the best in the world.”

Africa is the womb of civilization. As a result, martial science and arts is one more archetype where Africa is the birthplace. Providing the practitioner with a way to strengthen his body, mind and spirit. Martial arts are steeped in spirituality. Their Afro-Egyptian origins are a “science really locked in the unseen,” says Chandler. They are much more complex and profound than what Mr. Miyagi states in the movie, The Karate Kid, “Wax on, wax off.”

Suggested Readings:

Ancient Future: The Teachings and Prophetic Wisdom of the Seven Hermetic Laws of Ancient Egypt.

Wayne B. Chandler, author.

Email: ancient_future81@hotmail.com
Bobby Seale: First of all, we were never racist. It's the so-called 'New Black Panther Party' that are a bunch of idiot racists! They are anti-Semitic and anti-white. When they had arguments down in Dallas, Texas several years ago in a meeting with the city council about education for their kids, it was the New Black Panther Party who jumped on the Mexican-Americans and beat them up.

So ever since then, I have despised them for hijacking our name. So, we were not racist.

And, another thing I want people to know about the Black Panther Party is that there were other great characteristics of the Black Panther Party. Coali-
In 1966, America was in the middle of the Vietnam War. Twenty-nine percent of the war casualties were young Black men. Malcolm X had been assassinated only a year earlier. The fight for civil and human rights for Blacks was greater than ever. It was then that two young Black men, Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton, formed the Black Panther Party. An organization created for self-defense in Oakland, Calif, because police brutality was devastating the Black community. The Party began to study American law to help educate and inform the Black community about their rights to bear arms. They also put together many community service projects, such as the Breakfast Program for Children.

And though the Party's co-founder, Huey P. Newton was jailed on phony charges, the Party's membership grew from 200 to approximately 5,000 members. The Party united a nation of tired and oppressed Blacks and transformed them into a working machine with a new frame of mind. Even though the American government shut down the Party's programs and activities, Bobby Seale and the Black Panthers will always have immense historical presence for their part in the fight for Black's civil rights.

Today Bobby Seale is a motivational and educational speaker across the United States. While giving a glimpse of history he once observed, he speaks about the ideas, philosophies and convictions of the Black Panther Party.

Teddy Harris, junior communications major, interviewed Bobby Seale Feb. 25, 2003. He was the keynote speaker at a Black United Students' Black history program at Kent State.

Harris: What do you want people to know about your good friend Huey?

Seale: Bobby was a great contributor to the organization. But Huey was in jail when we became a bigger organization. I organized 5,000 people while Huey was in jail. I organized, Kathleen Cleaver, Fred Hampton and others while Huey was sitting in jail. Huey did not organize those 5,000 people. When Huey went to jail we were a rag-tag organization.

But Huey organized the police patrols, and he took the law and put it in philosophical perspective. Huey had studied law prior to the beginning of the Black Panther Party. Huey became a symbol of resistance of then 1960s modern day oppression.

Harris: Do you regret the Party being attacked during the '60s?

Seale: Why should I regret it? Ask the racists. They are the ones who came and attacked our offices.

J. Edgar Hoover, the head of the FBI at the time, had directed his FBI people at the time along with the counter-intelligence program, or the FBI program, known as the Co-Intel Pro, to get every police department to attack every last one of our offices, except for the central office because, some young white cop found the plans to attack the office there and took them and gave them to our lawyers. But, they attacked every Black Panther Party in this country.

Harris: Is it true that the FBI flooded the Black communities with hard drugs?

Seale: First of all, this so-called flooding the community with drugs happened after the Black Panther Party was over.

Secondly, part of this impression has to do with a film that was out, called Panther. This film is a bunch of low-life fiction as far as I am concerned. It is a smooth story.

But in real history, we had nothing to do with any wars with drug cartels. And 90 percent of that was not true that they put on the screen. We had some shoot chases, but that movie was Hollywood-influenced. But the way that I followed it, the way that drugs flooded the community really did not happen until 1980 or 1981.
In concluding Bobby Seale’s interview, many should know there is a need to continue to fight for civil rights. We do not live under the same circumstances Bobby Seale and the Black Panther Party did in the ‘60s. We have our own struggles. For example, there are more Black men in jail and the prison system than enrolled in college. A predominantly white university does not recognize the need to retain its Department of Pan-African Studies. Though you may not see racially motivated beatings on the streets now, oppression has not stopped. It is still here. Look around and analyze the situation and join the fight for human liberation.
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Your Voice to the University
When we speak about discrimination, we tend to assume the parties involved are either Black or white. We often overlook the fact that America is filled with different races and cultures. We seldom ask Native-American, Asians or Latinos for their views and experiences with discrimination. In the same light, we more often overlook the small sub-cultures within each race.

Groups you may refer to as the rockers, candy kids, bangers, hippies, gothics and ravers are considered a sub-culture all of its own. Collectively, they make up what is known as Alternatives. Group members are characterized as having dark hair (often worn in dreds), beaded or hemp jewelry, multiple tattoos and piercings, liberal personalities and a naive, hopeful outlook on life.
Melissa "Missy" Whittier is an 18-year-old, white, senior at Kent Roosevelt High School. Four years ago, Missy began dressing in oversized pants, undersized shirts, visors, pigtails and plastic bracelets. She had come to a conclusion: she didn't really fit well with other average high school kids. So she decided to befriend the Alternatives. Once she began dressing and hanging with the Alternatives, people began to think she was promiscuous, a drug user and racist just because she changed her clothes?

Missy said she is mentally ready to handle any negative experiences associated with her physical appearance because of her upbringing. Missy had a troubled childhood that caused her to mature earlier than most, which left her able to handle most anything. Many times, she was left to care for her little brother. At 17, she moved out of her family's home and moved into a house with her boyfriend and three strangers. Today she continues to go to school, work and care for her own household at such a young age.

Missy says, "The one thing the past four years have taught me is that everybody thinks of and sees minorities and subcultures in a different light. Each group has been labeled by a major stereotype, and though I don’t feel our group has been forgotten, we are definitely transparent in the eyes of the public. We are seen but so quickly disregarded. It is like we were never there. Eventually I may have to change my appearance to succeed with my career, but that will never change what my experiences have made me. I think in the long run, I have become more open-minded and understanding about prejudice because I have been subjected to it. It is sad to say, but we live in a world where had I dressed differently, I would have been considered normal despite what I felt.”
Alex Arevalo is a 21-year-old, Samoan, junior at Kent State. His everyday look is a black shirt and cut-off pants. He has six piercings in each ear, a pierced eyebrow, tattoos everywhere and a bull ring through his nose. Alex was first introduced to this lifestyle by his older brother, who took him to his first punk rock show while Alex was in elementary school. After the show, he figured if he dressed like the performers, no one would bother him. This new look became a lifestyle for Alex.

Alex is unconcerned with the way people view him and if they discriminate against his appearance. He says, "Usually I don't care what people think about me. The whole point of ignorance is that people are unaware. And what can you really expect from a stranger?"

"Although being a minority hasn't drastically affected my life, there is one incident that I will never forget. It was my first day in STSU (Southwest Texas State University) my freshman year. I was dropping off some friends at their dorm after a late movie. Due to lack of parking spaces, I parked in the commuter's lot and started on the mole hike back to my dorm. I had to walk down a poorly lit street. About half way down it, a green pick-up truck came up next to me, and four guys jumped out. I am guessing that I was picked because I was alone, and I looked different, the perfect target of a mean prank. They came towards me with their fraternity shirts and cowboy boots and cracked a beer bottle over my head. Disoriented, I fell to the ground. As they continued to kick me, one of them said, "Get the fuck out of here. Punks aren't welcome, so go home." I managed to pick myself up and swing at one of them. After I got a few more licks in, I was hit with another beer bottle, and I fell to the ground."
"As I lay there, one of them whispered something into my ear, but my ears were ringing so badly, I didn't hear him. But I did feel it when he put his cigar out on my left forearm and kicked the side of my head. Afterwards I was told that I had a concussion, bruised cranium, four broken bones in my right hand, two broken ribs, a dented shin, 16 stitches on my forehead and a second to third degree burn from the cigar. They beat me up, but I managed to knock out three of their teeth.

"Around finals time, I saw the guys again. Of course they laughed when they saw me, but when I walked up and handed them the teeth I had knocked out, they were quick to shut up. I would rather die fighting than let people hurt me.

"I want to be respected and have the same opportunity as everyone else. We have to stop judging people by petty things and see the person for their character, not by where they came from or what they look like."

Courageous Minority is a local band in which Pomeroyal "Pom" Charles Fountain III is a member. Growing up with a variety of cultures and traditions, Pom's heritage is a blend of ethnicity. His mother is English, German and North-American Indian. His father is African, South-American Indian, French and wears his hair in dreadlocks. Pom never thought much about being a minority or being in a subculture because it's always been his life. In previous years, he hasn't felt openly prejudged because of his ethnicity but has experienced prejudicial treatment because of his earthy and natural look. Many make judgments of his individual style and question his education level. Most think he is only going through a phase or rebelling against the world.

His experience with the Alternatives lifestyle is his desire to be more natural. He says, "People who aren't sure of who they are may do it to fit in. I feel the normal, respectable costume strips people of their ethnicity. I don't dress, speak or act different to fit in. I do it because I was raised in it. I am comfortable with it, and it is me. That is all. I don't feel the need to buy expensive things I'll soon get tired of."
“I don’t feel this need to impress people with my material items. Certain places have not been comfortable with my look for their work environments. Then again, some places, the places I really want to be, don’t care. I am a musician, and in my career field, it is what comes out of your mouth that people are interested in, not what is on the label of my shirt. I do not feel that those that make up the Alternative group are invisible. It is more ‘if we don’t acknowledge them, maybe they will go away’ complex.

“If anything, I am in the minority of thinking individuals. I am not any different than anyone else. I just wish everyone would think for themselves. We have a sub-standard government, and I don’t understand why more Americans aren’t angry about the failures of the diplomatic system we trust to oversee our futures.

“Stop worrying about the little everyday things before those things make you blind to the big picture. When you are looking at a painting, you will understand it more knowing what neighborhood that artist was raised in or what they were going through at the time than you would ever realize just by knowing the artist’s race. The Alternative group, as we are called, have no specific title. We have no halls, no meetings and no established traditions. All we have is the drive to use the full extent of our rights as they were intended. We are more concerned with the things that matter. Race just isn’t one of them, especially since we are all a part of mankind.”
Race has never defined character. It is an excuse to judge others. Though society has come far, we have further to go yet. Missy, Alex and Pom are discarded groups that carry the same feelings as many of us. Though they may not have as much history with racist confrontation as Blacks and whites have, they still experience discrimination. Don't shy away from people wearing black who are covered in tattoos. Remember how it would feel to know your personality was being judged by the color of your clothing. It is certainly similar to judging someone by the color of his or her skin.
Yesterday, an interesting thing happened to me. I was told I am not Black.

The kicker for me was when my friend stated that the island of Puerto Rico was not a part of the African Diaspora. I wanted to go back to the old school playground days and yell, “You said what about my momma!” But after speaking to several friends, I found out that many Black Americans and Latinos agree with him. The miseducation of the Negro is still in effect!

I am so tired of having to prove to others that I am Black, that my people are from the Motherland. That Puerto Rico, along with Cuba, Panama and the Dominican Republic, are part of the African Diaspora. Do we forget that the slave ships dropped off our people all over the world, hence the word Diaspora?

The Atlantic slave trade brought Africans to Puerto Rico in the early 1500s. Some of the first slave rebellions took place on the island of Puerto Rico. Until 1846, Africanos on the island had to carry a libreta to move around the island, like the passbook system in apartheid South Africa. In Puerto Rico, you will find large communities of descendants of the Yoruba, Bambara, Wolof and Mandingo people. Puerto Rican culture is inherently African culture.

There are hundreds of books that will inform you, but I do not need to read book after book to legitimize this thesis. All I need to do is go to Puerto Rico and look all around me. Damn, all I really have to do is look in the mirror every day.

I am often asked what I am—usually by Blacks who are lighter than me and by Latinos who are darker than me. To answer the $64,000 question, I am a Black Boricua, Black Rican, Puertoriquena! I am always questioned about why I choose to call myself Black over Latino, Spanish, Hispanic.

Let me break it down.

I am not Spanish. Spanish is just another language I speak. I am not a Hispanic. My ancestors are not descendants of Spain, but descendants of Africa. I define my existence by race and land. (Boriken is the indigenous name of the island of Puerto Rico.)

Being Latino is not a cultural identity but rather a political one. Being Puerto Rican is not a racial identity, but rather a cultural and national one. Being Black is my racial identity.
Why do I have to consistently explain this to those who are so-called conscious? Is it because they have a problem with their identity? Why is it so bad to assert who I am, for me to big-up my Africanness?

My Blackness is one of the greatest powers I have. We live in a society that devalues Blackness all the time. I will not be devalued as a human being, as a child of the Supreme Creator.

Although many of us in activist circles are enlightened, many of us have baggage that we must deal with. So many times, I am asked why many Boricuas refuse to affirm their Blackness. I attribute this denial to the ever-rampant anti-Black sentiment in America and throughout the world. But I will not use this as an excuse. Often Puerto Ricans who assert our Blackness are not only outcast by Latinos, who identify more with their Spanish Conqueror than their African ancestors, but we are also shunned by Black Americans who do not see us as Black.

Nelly Fuller, a great Black sociologist, stated: “Until one understands the system of white supremacy, anything and everything else will confuse you.” Divide and conquer still applies.

Listen people. Being Black is not just skin color, nor is it synonymous with Black Americans. To assert who I am is the most liberating and revolutionary thing I can ever do. Being a Black Puerto Rican encompasses me racially, ethnically and, most importantly, gives me a homeland to refer to.

So I have come to this conclusion: I am whatever I say I am! (Thank you, Rakim.)

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They say life’s a bitch and then you die is that why so many young black males die? Maybe it’s a conspiracy – I doubt it.

It’s more of a lust for money and the presence of jealousy and envy.

See ya’ll listening but ya don’t hear me.
Brothas wanna be millionaires like Cash Money but show up to job interviews looking bummy.

So they return to the only life they know the streets.
But in the street, shits deep.
One day, you the man.
The next just a fan of anotha man cus he knew how to work his hand, or a pot, see my words be like Tobasco sauce - shits hot.

Can’t play me cus I thinks not some, but often bout how many black parents picked out coffins for their sons who chose the street life and died by the gun.

It’s time we as a black youth be like Spike Lee and “Do The Right Thing.”

Ain’t shit in the street but pain, cain and hood fame.
All that trouble just to make a name for yourself.

See everything is not about wealth, its more about a peace of mind and without it we as black youth will always be behind.
are you ready people?
ready for a time perhaps spoken in the oldest books
where actions made from ignorance and bigotry depict spite
and little piglets in suits sink and wallow in the mud
while we wonder on our fates and twist hairs out of their sockets...

are you ready people?
ready for the freedoms and securities you thought you had
wished you had, wanted to have but all the time held like a blanket over your eyes not
showing you the real

truth

ready to realize that we're not the only ones in this place
ready to see real life strife and pain?

are you ready people?
are you ready to SEE that the foundations are the cause for this
the whitened paint over the bruised, reddened scars leave blue imprints
visible to only those who see the truth
amongst the tainted some cry, some laugh while others dance, oblivious to the world's
heartbeat

let the chickens come home to roost...

are you ready people?
ready to wake up and see that we live in a world and days not promised
ready to watch lies being reported to you even as we speak
by self patriotic emotion infused media personality
all instruments of one plantation master
directing the chains of command throughout the burning bush of this confusion
and the overseers thrust their ignorance onto the slaves who let it be
and you proudly wear your red white and blues...you're not ready

you're not ready to admit
no

you're not ready to accept
no

you're too brainwashed to even see

the trials and tribulations of the life we lead shape our histories, herstories
under the sun and past the moons we dream of expansive horizons
failing to remedy the ills of our own sick souls
they watch with rage in the silent minds
impressive the force beneath the calm surface
and only those of true sight will notice the fiendishly evil claws that grasp convincingly
at the world's throat

are y'all ready?
You brought me dreams on credit... and used deferred billing when you began coming up short... postponing appointments and post-dating promises, never paying up on what you owed.

Your interest constantly accrued and accumulated until I grew tired of you depositing in other cases and grew overdrawn and finally decided to withdraw, or better yet... bounce.

I thought about going back, if only you could check yourself but then realized you weren't worth my savings... then I started adding up the times you deceived me, multiplied by the times you spent me emotionally, without considering my feelings, divided by the few times you actually did sweet things, I get a small dividend, very small returns on the investments of love I made.

I began understanding and taking into account that I didn't profit much from our relationship... receiving very little mutual interest from you, every corner held a different secret from your portfolio. Things didn't balance out, and I ultimately took into account the facts and figures that mattered to you and the facts and figures that made a difference to me... came to the realization that loving you was over-taxing me, so I moved on to more promising equity.

Goodbye

By Charlene Nicole Ball

Its been a year and I still don't know why. You left without saying a word. Not even a simple goodbye. My feelings for you were so simple, pure and true. From the minute I saw you I knew that I had to love you. A certain charm that I hadn't seen before. The way my face would light up when you would walk through the door. The way my face would get hot when you would touch my skin. The way my heart skipped two beats when you said you wanted me to be more than a friend. I thought what we had was honestly true. I thought you felt about me... the same way I felt. It took me so long for my feelings to change. I bet you now you don't even remember my name. Its been a year and I still don't know why. After a year all I want to hear is a simple goodbye.
i just lie with my face to the walls these days.
draw the blind, wishing to wash my eyes drawn upon this face away
so i too could be blind... a little left out of this play of life.

the white walls hold holes of tacks once holding
posters? or photos?
images held sacred  maybe of that time with your mom when you were ten or
your dad, you, brother lighting the menorah.

the holes the reverse of constellations poking holes of light through a midnight blue ceiling.
i used to watch the stars through my window
and before that through dad’s handmade telescope.

not now... it’s been weeks since i’ve seen them—the constellations that were my consolation,
my solace, my compass, my characters deciding fates in their dramas.
cassenopeia my queen and orion on the hunt and the seven sisters pleaides

no more, i hate you.

head more drowning now than in the clouds.
laying in a puddle, filling with the salt of these tears, with the rains of the clouds,
and i am just waiting for this winter to melt.

anchored in this puddle
less sane the more grounded, earth bound.
i’m wishing for photos tacked in these holes on my walls
held with darts through faces of families foul and sickening.

on earth aging, already rotting inside to out holding black holes within me falsely mimicking holes
in my walls and the stars in the sky.

no more, i hate myself.

punching black holes, absorbing all matter that matters into this nothingness.

rotting, destroying all who i touch.
On what are the Affections of College Students Set?

By Iva Silaw

How many of us went to Sunday school as children learning about Adam and Eve and Noah the Arc? And I know you remember the days of singing “Father Abraham”. When did we leave this behind?
The Bible says:
When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.
1 Corinthians 13:11

Is this why we forgot these things? Is it because we were instructed to grow up, taking on responsibilities as adults must?
   God’s word also instructs us:
Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.
Proverbs 22:6

As they took you to church your parents believed, you would learn the ways of the Lord you sang about and choose to live your life accordingly. Have you departed from these ways?

Maybe while at college you go to Church when you can and you might even sing in a Gospel Choir. You might even have Yolanda Adams or T. D Jakes in your head phones.

We say we’re Christians, but do our lives really reflect this claim. Can we go to the club Thursday, Friday or Saturday night then go to Church on Sunday morning? Can we sing praises to God knowing some of our clothes show more than they cover causing others to lust after us? Can we talk about who’s doing of wearing what and with whom and ten minutes later give God the glory and honor He deserves?

The New Living Translation highlights a position on this:
Such people claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live. They are despicable and disobedient, worthless for doing anything good.
Titus 1:16

Are we denying God in the way we are living or are we living what we claim? We can’t be perfect—we’re human—but God’s Word tells us that without him, that is if our actions deny him, we are worthless. Who wants to be worthless?

The Gospel, or Good News, is that with God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26)
Once again, think back to that child in Sunday school you once were,
Jesus told his disciples, I assure you, unless you turn from your sins and become as little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven.

If you want to follow Jesus you must remember what it is to be like a child. You must turn away from the worldly gossip, music, clothes and alcohol and
   Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. (Colossians 3:2)

We are told:
   But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people: that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light
1 Peter 2:9

Is our chosen generation going to show forth praises of God? Yes, there will most definitely be some. But are you going to be one of them?
**Sweet Victory**

By Ed Bankston

I feel that I can accomplish anything. I remind myself to stay afloat in this sea of have-nots and has-beens. If thought truly proceeds substance, than whatever I speak will come into existence. This is the most effective advice that I can offer. Whatever the mind believes it can achieve.

The amount of thinking and talking versus actually doing is what I have a problem with organizing. With serious thinking, less talking, and more doing, I can become a more effective person. Time to quit talking and start doing. The message is simple: believe in myself; and take direct-action toward reaching my goals. There will be setbacks, so be prepared for them (not if) but when they come. These setbacks or obstacles only make victory that much sweeter.
The Railroad Worm's Transcendental Training
By Marie B. Ho

Past midnight hours of listening to the train's warning as it halts traffic and blocks intersections
I walk between doubled tracks and shiver with each visible breath.

The stones grate and grind beneath my dragging steps waiting for the moment two will pass without touching.

Their single headlights approach.

Surrounded by speeded light colliding, I can not stand this blinding rush my knees shift against the gravel leaving temporary impressions, a fading memory caused by the gravity of falling suddenly in this crevice seeking safety at the last possible moment hiding.

My hair flies wildly across my persistent vision scratching eyes forced open afraid of missing something unseen, unheard like the pulse of the wheels beating closely the frictional edges of metal singing ecstatically a tune pulled, pressed into being.

I regain a stance to look at the stretching mile of cars in the cornered distance. Letters counted by short glances, reading makes one STOP for a visible moment caught with this seeking gaze of vision only for this or that instant shocking white flashes of graffiti wielding messages withheld by the oncoming velocity of an engine pulling the streaked paintings away to disappear in the square-shaped bending distance below bridges crossed and framed like an unfixed photograph these are hazy lines blurring in my memory.

My face whitens against the hardened metal. I retrace the absent-minded horizon and the tiling perspective of my single-tracked thoughts, pressing (un)sleepy lines upon my hoary cheeks.

To feel the lost vibrations now craving claustrophobic channels created by coming too close to two trains juxtaposed my heart, surpassing ordinary limits, feels transfigured, transfixed, transfused feels as transient, train-tramped (transparently) showing its loco [motive] tendency slowly drawing, dragging hollowed and empty cargo-less cars toward certain defined destinations under known constellations, studied stars.
I stare down at my parallel-lined progression
railed and trailing my towed emptiness,
traveling bound to temporary rails of delusion.
Time fixes oblong wooden ties across
the roadbed of possibility laying down
the direction of this railroaded railroad
transtramtranstramtranstramtranstramtranstramtranstramtranstramtranstram
self-propelled loco.

Motionless mechanical meanings mingle between these missed connections,
left behind haunting rail yards of yesterday.
My mind’s missed a vehicle of expression
rests de-railed here in this place of wheel-rutted train cars
and railroad worms begin to gather
their ghost-lighted trains
abandoned and recalling
stations of stopping and going
the liveliness of conductors that once were
pulling the rope and releasing
my thoughts from silent crossings.

Across my soul tracks these trap doors pulled open.

ENCOURAGER
By Allen Edwards

Encourager,
You helped me to see my future...
As an endless stream of possibilities.
I see how clearly you see me,
And realize,
How I should visualize things to be.

Thank you,
For a listening ear,
For being here,
And showing my heart, that someone really cares.

See,
This friendship, this sisterhood, this love that you’ve shared;
Encourager,
To you, no kindred spirit can compare.
As the doors closed, I thought to myself that life is like a black and white photo. If a picture was all one color, we couldn’t define the view too well, and everything was simply in black and white that would just make for a generic time. Ding! The elevator stops and the eighth floor is lit, reminding me of a black ball on the pool table. The doors open to a room full of unfamiliar people and little culture, staring in my direction. Maybe it is just me, but I feel like a giant fly is watching me through the thousand panels of its eyes, almost forgot why I was here in the first place.

It was a drawing of twenty-two names for a two person, seven-day cruise to the Bahamas. I bought a five-dollar raffle ticket at a local charity event and received a letter declaring me a possible winner. For a short moment, I got a feeling that I did something wrong, or that I was some type of outcast. All I did was walk into a lobby. I took a seat in the chair underneath an African Batik painting. I observed that most of the people in the lobby probably could afford a few trips to the Bahamas, contest or not. “Have you ever been to the Bahamas?” Some elder man asked me. “No, I haven’t,” I replied. “Well you look just like the Caribbean-n-mon people”, he continued, “you need a mulatto accout.” I’ve never met this man in my life and our first conversation was a touchstone to prove my unworthiness. Anyway, he went on to tell me how he owned some land in Saint Thomas, besides the three rooms to the coffee shops here and his two already own. They go there quite often to get away with a wild and crazy time. Ding! The elevator bell on the other side of the lobby room reminded me of my feeling inadequate. My day was fine until I got to this destination, coming from “black belt.” They must’ve thought I was desperate because most of these people watched every move I made as if there was some curious silent bet of how un-civilized I was going to be.

My view panned to eyes echoing familiar sentiments of disgust and persecution. Clean dreadslocks, Tshirt, loose fitting khakis, and casual hiking boots could not have caused this feeling of not fitting in this contest. The raffle began after depositing one of a two-part black ticket stub into a white-gated barrel with a crank handle. Round and round the tumbling numbered slips shuffled as the oval cylinder was in motion. The barrel stopped after some twenty turns. The winning ticket was drawn at the left side of the wall where I stood. Sadly, it wasn’t me announced as the winner. Ding! The elevator doors opened and the number ticket was called very loud and clear again, but whoever had the winning ticket didn’t seem to be present. Then out she came from the elevator stumbling. I couldn’t believe the same lady who looked at me earlier as a criminal, was shooting a cold stare at me, while trying to recover her balance again. She exited the elevator holding up a numbered black ticket and she hustled to the registration table to declare herself the winner. Her friends jumped up out of excitement to join her side, like she tactically planned out a great victory. I started to wonder if this drawing was fixed. She didn’t even seem to be as excited as her friends but went on to say how she loved the people in Jamaica and how beautiful the islands were. In disbelief, I walked away from the clamor in the lobby.

The elevator doors opened for me to get on board. Seven, six, five, and descending. I started wondering if this elevator was bringing me down, in a way I couldn’t see. Four, three, two, Ding! The doors opened to an ultra high gloss marble floor reflecting my brown face, arms, and hands. My Afro hung dreadlocked, like the black bars of a prison cell. So, what did the crime rate have to do with me? Absolutely nothing!

I’ve come to an understanding that some people wear misconceptions on their face like a glossy floor. I don’t know for sure where stereotypes came from, but I know that they exist. This experience has taught me much about ignorance and how sometimes people are more comfortable with not knowing each other. My reflection on the marble floor reminded me of just how I stood above it, shiny like a precious star hardened with beauty.
Janet Black is a mother, a deacon, a feminist, a professional speaker, and an African-American.

Story by Marie B. Ho
Photos by Angela Beallor

At 3 years old Lashara Black was clever enough to figure out that some of her friends had two parents—a mom and a dad.

"Chase has a dad in his house," young Lashara said inquisitively requesting her mother’s attention. "We don't have a dad in our house."

Lashara’s mother, Janet Black, sat in the gas station thinking about her adopted daughter’s question. She was 33 years old and single at the time. She wasn’t sure what the appropriate age was to tell Lashara, but she felt compelled to tell her the truth.
"We won't have a dad in our house," Lashara's mother said in response to her daughter's observation. "I'm a lesbian."

"What's a liz...be...in?" Lashara countered, fumbling with the newfound word.

"A lesbian is a woman who has a girlfriend or is married to another woman," Black said. She knew Lashara already understood the nature of dating and marriage. Lashara was silent for a moment but had another question for her mother.

"When are we going to have another woman in our house?" Lashara asked. Black, Kent State alumna and deacon at Emmanuel Fellowship Church in Akron, first revealed her homosexuality to her daughter in 1991 and remembers the moment clearly.

Lashara is 15 years old now and has faced many issues growing up as an African-American, not just as a daughter of a lesbian.

"When I adopted Lashara, some people made the assumption that my sexuality would be an overriding issue," Black said. "However, she's been called n— more times than anyone has called her mom a dyke."

"I have to tell people I'm a lesbian," Black said. "People can see that I'm a black woman. Race is a much bigger nugget than sexuality."

Each generation, Black said, has their perception of "what it means to be black," and her daughter's experiences with racism are much different from her own.

Neither of Black's parents graduated high school. Her ancestors include slaves, sharecroppers and factory workers from the South. She and her older brother grew up in Warren as the first generation born in a northern state.

"Colored and white bathrooms are very much a part of my memory," Black said. "Race plays out a lot different than it used to. Racism isn't as overt, and being black is sometimes defined by what's on the surface: music, clothes or the type of car you are driving.

"We all make choices about where we put our resources, and a lot of the time, I can see it's not tied to real values, community involvement or education."

Since 1978, when Black enrolled at Kent State, she has spent 20 years living in and out of Kent as a resident. When Lashara attended school in Kent, Black joined the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) and often found she was the only Black parent attending the meetings.

"I felt as if a lot of the parents weren't fighting the same fight," Black said, recalling her frustration.

"There were only a couple of parents that made themselves visible in a community that is 10 percent African-American. It only costs $5 to join. We needed some semblance of community involvement."

A sharp contrast was evident in the Black community's stereotypical involvement, Black said, particularly the participation of Black males, within the Kent Park and Recreation athletic programs.

"I'm a firm believer in getting kids involved in community activities," Black said. "When they're involved in the community, they learn how to take care of it better and treat each other right."

Lashara was involved in several school and extracurricular activities.

"She'd be the only Black girl in a car pool or on a sports team," Black said. "It gets old to be the only one after awhile."

Janet Black and her partner, Laura Killian, sit among the pews with Montae and Michaela Wamsley, two of Black's grandchildren from a previous relationship. The family had participated in a Sunday worship service at Emmanuel Fellowship Church in Akron.
Not A Lone Lesbian Mother

Black, who identified herself as a politically active feminist, thrived on community involvement while working for Women of Color, the Affirmative Action Committee and the National Organization of Women beginning in the 1980s. Her previous experience as the Lesbian Rights Director for the National Organization of Women in Washington, D.C. during 1993 and 1994 motivated Black to form her own women's support group.

In 1996, she formed Mother Wit, a support group for lesbian and bisexual mothers. "I learned as much as I could and tried to bring it home," Black said. "I wanted to find political and legal ways to be supportive in the community."

She started the group by compiling the names and numbers of a few women she had previously met. Then she posted contact information for the group in newspapers and on bulletin boards.

"We live in a society where women make less money than men," Black said. "When you add on top of that a woman of color, there may be a number of things that make a lesbian household stressful."

Sometimes mothers have their first homosexual experience with another woman and are fastened to a very unfriendly environment, Black said. They may have to deal with the father's visitation rights or finding a comfortable place to worship God.

Mother Wit included discussion panels on dealing with homosexuality and religion, coming out to children, gay-friendly pediatricians and living with partners. Many of the women, Black said, that belonged to the group were currently married to or separated from men.

Mother Wit's meetings ended recently when Black moved her family to Fairlawn. During the group's six-year period, she created an address list of more than 100 women. She currently maintains an e-mail list of the previous members and does follow-up calls when needed.

Back-to-School Special: Black Back On Campus

Lawrence Faulk, program director of PRIDE! Kent and senior psychology major, met Black during the resident assistant diversity awareness training session held by resident services in August 2002.

Black initially spoke on a discussion panel that addressed issues of diversity, including homosexuality, religion and homophobia in the residence halls.

"I think that religion is one of the main reasons homosexuality isn't accepted by a lot of people today," Faulk said during a recent interview. "A lot of homosexuals don't want to come out because of what their religion says.

"My father was very religious and it was tough for me being gay and going to church. It just wasn't accepted. The toughest thing my parents had to grasp wasn't only me being gay but whether I could be accepted by God."

After Faulk learned that Black was ordained as a deacon at a gay affirming church in Akron, he asked her to speak on Christianity and homosexuality during a PRIDE! Kent meeting and during their National Coming Out Week celebration.

Black started training as a deacon in 1999 and
was ordained at Emmanuel Fellowship Church in 2000 by a United Church of Christ pastor, Linda Meredith.

"We are a rather traditional Christ-centered congregation," Meredith said. "Emmanuel Fellowship's membership is diverse and knows what it is like to be displaced from their home churches and denominations. We are Christian disciples who discovered ourselves in a minority group by sexual orientation."

During deacon training, Black said she learned about the importance of historical and cultural context when reading the Bible.

"If you believe that the Bible is a collection of writings divinely inspired, it doesn't mean it was written in a vacuum. There are a lot of things the Bible says. You have to think about what it means for you," Black said.

Helen Cunningham, a resident assistant and senior photo-journalism major, attended the training session and voiced her opinion about homosexuality and Christianity openly to Faulk, who is also a resident assistant. Faulk invited Cunningham to express her opposing view following Black's speech, sponsored by PRIDE! Kent.

In a recent interview, Cunningham said she views homosexuality as a sin, according to Biblical scriptures, and believes demons or spirits can cause a person to be gay. She also said she isn't homophobic nor does she hate homosexuals.

"Everybody's going to stray and do what they want," Cunningham said. "My strong belief is that Christ isn't going to lead us to have sex with whomever, to do whatever we want, to have homosexuality, to do this or do that."

Faulk said, "If there's controversy we need to get it out in the open. We need people who are willing to speak on the subject of homosexuality and Christianity. It's good that Janet Black and Helen Cunningham both come out and speak about their different beliefs."

Cunningham said, "I'm a full-hearted believer in the scriptures. Everybody has their own beliefs. It's about respecting each other and seeing beyond that. You need to lay your life before Christ, and you ask Christ to lead you. You don't let your silly lusts and desires lead you."

Cunningham said she usually feels a strong link to other Christians, but she felt disconnected from Black.

"I can tell when most Christians really have a spark for Christ," Cunningham said. "I didn't feel anything with Janet Black. Strangers don't have to tell me they are Christians. I can feel it."

Celebrating 30 years of advocacy and service, PAFSA formed in 1972 to promote the participation and contribution of the Pan African Community to the growth and success of Kent State University.

We celebrate the recognition and achievement of our faculty, administrators, staff, and their role in the success of all students and scholars.

We continue to promote equality and harmony among all the eight campuses and beyond.

Continue to celebrate your contributions- participate in PAFSA.

"...Working to insure excellence in education and employment through equal access for the Pan African Community at Kent State University..."
Black said, “Being gay and Christian is not mutually exclusive. The extreme right-wing Christian groups don’t own the word ‘Christian.’ They don’t own the phrase, family values.”

Kathryn Common, Kent State alumna and media specialist in the Office of Student Media at Kent State, said, “Homosexuality and Christianity don’t have to be two separate things. They are mutually compatible, and that was what Janet Black conveyed through her discussions.”

“Education is the most important part in overcoming an issue like homosexuality within the church,” Common said. “It should be possible for Christians who hold different positions on debatable Bible texts to come together and seek answers to difficult questions.

“Many homosexuals are being ostracized from the communities and ministries they were once a part of or even helped to build. Such behavior is contrary to the teachings of Christ.”

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Wednesday: 11-5 | Thursday: 11-5 | Friday: 11-3

Meetings Tuesday at 7pm in the Governance Chambers

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It is important to review the rationale of why diversity is a vital aspect to higher public education. A university is a system of public education, and it is automatically given the responsibility of educating the public taxpayers who support it. And if the public taxpayers are diverse in religion, culture, race and ethnicity, then the university has the duty to educate a diverse student body.

Now if diversity is not a part of the university’s student enrollment and not reflective of its taxpayers for an extensive period of time, wouldn’t this constitute institutionalized racism? In other words, institutionalized education is denying certain students the equal opportunity and privilege of obtaining an education. Social science defines institutional racism as, “...the established, customary, and respected ways in which society operates to keep the minority in a subordinate position” (Eitzen and Baca Zinn: 1994: 209).

Hence, institutions of higher education are a mere source of an evil, social, inequality cycle. Those without a higher education will have several other limited life opportunities, such as occupation, income and health care.

Consider another simple deduction. If all professors and administrators are responsible for the education of all public-taxpaying, potential students in higher education, then they too have the responsibility to educate a diverse student body.

Yet Kent State students, faculty and staff are not concerned enough with who is or who is not educated. This institution has failed to fulfill an undeniable purpose—to educate people of color.

To start, there should be a support service for students of color. Kent State must support, organize and fund cultural events. Kent State must encourage inclusion of students of color instead of overall exclusion in obtaining an education to support equality. Kent State must appoint a staff to be held accountable for students of color to enroll and graduate. It must not only try to continually increase the number of students of color but also see a proportional growth in the numbers who graduate as well as the growing number of total students enrolled.

But consider that in 1998, 251 African-Americans, 37 Hispanics and 4,207 Caucasians graduated. While four years later in 2002, 270 African-Americans, 48 Hispanics and 4,618 Caucasians graduated with a
degree from Kent State (RPIE Data Warehouse). Notice Caucasians increased by over 400 in four years, African Americans by 21, and Hispanics by 11. Today only 10 percent of Latinos complete a bachelor's degree.

Yet the Role and Mission statement of Kent State in the 1999-2000 university catalog reads "Kent serves a talented, culturally rich student body from Ohio and around the world, including historically under-represented and nontraditional students." As well as stating, "Kent's diverse faculty, skilled in the scholarship of teaching, discovery, application and integration, foster the intellectual life of the university." It even goes as far as to state, "At Kent a major focus is responding to social, cultural and economic challenges. In a complex changing world, KSU affirms its position as an essential, dynamic resource for the state of Ohio and beyond," (Undergraduate Catalog 1999-2000 iii).

It is interesting that these sentences are no longer verbatim in the current 2002-2003 catalog. Is it because the university realized the faculty really isn't diverse or that Kent isn't changing as fast as it should to educate its public or that it really doesn't teach a culturally rich student body from Ohio, including historically under-represented students? And by Kent State not accomplishing the 1999-2000 mission statement, it is impossible to prepare students for the global real world.

There are only 70 Hispanic faculty and staff out of 5,300 at Kent State. Why isn't Hispanic Heritage month more inclusive of administrators, staff and faculty? Shouldn't the university provide culture as a part of its education? And if it is a university-sponsored event, shouldn't everyone support event planning as well as attend functions?

Kent State did not celebrate Hispanic Heritage month last year. Sept. 15, 2002 - Oct. 15, 2002, because diversity and educating the public is not a reality or a priority. Furthermore, Hispanics aren't in enough sources of Kent State media or literature, such as the Web site, student profiles, guidebooks for high school students and the Imagine campaign. Subsequently, there is the lack of Latino study classes, the absence of a Hispanic faculty and staff association and the absence of a Hispanic graduate student association.

Kent State even lacks a migrant farm worker high school equivalency program in Northeast Ohio (despite the stereotype, a great percentage are U.S. citizens). Kent State seems to have no desire to educate the people who are brown, despite civil rights.

Hispanic REALITY!

Hispanics have surpassed Blacks as the nation's largest minority group. The Hispanic population in the United States is now roughly 37 million, 11.1 percent of the U.S. population. The United States is the world's fifth largest Spanish speaking country. And the U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2050, one in every four Americans will be Hispanic.

Hispanics are enormously diverse people. The term Hispanic refers to many different ethnic groups with ancestors from several dozen countries. The ancestry of Hispanic people ranges "from pure Spanish to mixtures of Spanish blood with Native American, African, German, Italian and other nationalities" (U.S. News & Special Report, 1998).

People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
In addition to actual Spaniards, people of Hispanic origin include African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Central and South-Americans (Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Nicaraguans, Hondurans, Panamanians, Costa Ricans, Colombians, Ecuadorians, Peruvians, Argentineans, Chileans, others), and Caribbean people, including Puerto Ricans, Cubans and Dominicans.

The U.S. Census, a count of who is in the United States, not a count of strictly citizens, isn't completely accurate. Not until 1990 was the census available in Spanish, so if you only spoke Spanish, you really weren't counted. And even in 2000, Hispanic or Latino was not regarded as a racial group, only as an ethnicity. In fact there are only six categories, of which the Census Bureau further diminishes into five official categories of: A) American Indian or Alaska Native, B) Asian, C) Black, D) White, E) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and F) Other Race (Ferrante and Browne: 2001: 4).

Slaves ships were much a part of South American history despite what you may have been taught. Africans did land on America before Columbus (read: "They Came Before Columbus" by Ivan Van Sertima). In spite of the European conquest of Latin America, there is a rich indigenous heritage of Latin America. Prior to 2000, if someone labeled their race as Hispanic/Latino under the Other Race option, the census reclassified them as one of the five official racial categories (Ferrante and Browne: 2001: 4).

One fact to point out is that according to the 2000 Census (Gilbert: 2003: 92), the average median family income by ethnicity was $60,000 for whites, $50,700 for Blacks, and $40,600 for Hispanics. This is further evidence of growing inequality among racial groups, falsi-

fying the greater myth that America is the land of equal opportunity.

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Research Planning & Institutional Effectiveness (RPE), A Division of Business & Finance. 2003 Table of Number of Degrees received, per year by race/ethnicity.
My Uncle Butch thinks that a man having sex with another man is devil-mess.

I love my uncle, but I am also very disappointed by what seems to me to be an incorrect, incomplete and ignorant view of the world. As I feel about my uncle, so do I feel about my people. In what may at first seem like a strange turn of events, Black people are among the most socially conservative and closed-minded people in America. If we want to find sexual rigidity, stunted artistic preference, culinary timidity, homophobia, religious fundamentalism, ridiculous rejection of scientific advance and general resistance to change and new experiences, we need not look any farther than ourselves.

Being quite left of center myself, this narrow-mindedness is that much more glaring to me. But perhaps in reading this, less liberal (or "liberated" as I like to say) people may be able to engage in some self-examination resulting in personal growth. The word liberal is defined as "Not limited to or by established, traditional, orthodox, or authoritarian attitudes, views or dogmas... favoring proposals for reform, open to new ideas for progress, and tolerant of the ideas and behaviors of others."

Our near monolithic adherence to a certain political party that disingenuously claims liberalism notwithstanding, our collective culture is one of intolerance, stagnation, and fear of new experience. I can't tell you how many times I've heard friends of mine asked questions like, "You don't listen to rap?" or "You're a vegetarian?" followed by "You're not really Black." Ours tends to be a very anachronistic and dogmatic way to look at the world.

In high school, I was met with confusion and what seemed almost to be a strange kind of suspicion or wariness when I reported that I had gone with a white friend of mine to see a local rock band called Cows in the Graveyard, not because the people I told had heard the music and were surprised that I liked it given what they knew about my musical tastes, but because they couldn't conceive of a Black man enjoying rock music.

Similarly there are too many of us who cannot understand the concept of going to a museum or a library for the enjoyment of the experience or going to another country or even just another region in America to experience something unlike the environment to which one is accustomed. There is almost a drive away from expanding our horizons, a drive away from knowing more about ourselves and the world we live in, as though there is a conscious effort to contain us within the tradition and mythology that has become so ingrained in our culture.
I know this essay is not intended to be an in-depth study concerned with the nature, extent and causes of the closed-mindedness found in Black culture. I’m sure that would take years of study and debate, and the resulting data and analysis would probably be beyond the scope of this publication. However, I would still like to explore why we are the way we are, at least a little bit.

Until very recently, it was my thought that religion was the cause of the closed state that black minds tend to find themselves in, Christianity specifically as it is the most widely held and firmly entrenched religion in black America. This modified western-Asian tribal religion has found a comfortable home in slave-era and post slavery Black culture. Christianity is a very dogmatic and judgmental set of beliefs; things are right or wrong, good or evil. That which is unacceptable is punished, socially, criminally and divinely.

With religion, things that would seem to be a question of choice, personal preference and health (i.e., sexual orientation, specific sex acts, quantity of sex partners and marital status, dietary habits, etc.) are forced into the realm of morality. This becomes a problem because the source of this morality is supposed to be the ultimate authority. The submission to said authority helps to create a habitual system of social and intellectual authoritarianism. Any authoritarian system immediately inhibits growth. Religion in general is designed to discourage debate, doubt and dissent. Islam, the second largest religion in the Black community, suffers from the same dynamic of restrictive absolutism.

But as I thought more deeply about the topic of this essay, I realized that just like those Black people that think it is white to listen to jazz, religious closed-mindedness is but a symptom of a larger problem. I considered the study that concluded that college-educated women are more likely to perform oral sex than non-college-educated women, and I believe that it hints at a positive correlation between levels of education and levels of general open-mindedness.

All that is fine, but where is this exercise leading us? Well, first of all, let me mention that if you are still reading after the last paragraph discussing religion, you may very well be more open minded than I thought, but I digress. Now, all this is leading us to the idea that perhaps the economic and social restrictions placed on us (including those restrictions placed on education) since our introduction to what became this country had an effect on what we allow ourselves to experience. It’s been a theme in the Black community that certain negative aspects of the larger American culture may be embraced by Black culture. We are told (directly and indirectly) that dark skin is ugly, and we internalize a color hierarchy that continues to plague us (in all likelihood, if you are Black, you are probably at least a little color-struck).

It seems like a natural extension of this idea that we would internalize externally imposed limitations. This issue could be a learned helplessness response combined with a self-esteem need. In other words, people don’t want to try what they think they can’t do, and people would rather think they don’t want to do something than think they can’t.

This problem is pandemic, and reaches deep into our capabilities, stifling our chances for advancement because nothing is as simple as “why can’t you listen to other types of music?” This part of our culture supports the status quo, not the most advantageous thing for the disadvantaged. I really can’t create and outline some amazing social program to combat cultural inclinations toward self-limitation in this essay, but I can encourage myself and all of you to try new things, stretch yourselves, abandon ridiculing those who do things differently, and hopefully that will become a habit and the habit, will become a mind set that could widen our collective straight and narrow path.
People of African descent have remained deeply connected to spirituality for thousands of years. As an African people, our connection to our belief in a Higher Power is vital and integral to the development of our cultures. Even after enduring centuries of torturous slavery in the United States and in many other parts of the Westernized world, this remains an unshakable element of our reality.

In the African-American experience, we have endured being force fed religion, being born again into religion, and converting to other religions. What we classify as religion is being challenged by a movement that has similarities to the spiritual and Black Nationalist movements of the past and present, such as the Nation of Islam and the Original African Hebrew Israelites. This movement is called Nuwaupu.

Nabi Me-Lek Ye-huda Ben Ma’at Yisra-El-Bey, referred to by most simply as Yisrael, is a Nuwaupian or adherent to the Nuwaupian faith. Not only was he born a Pentecostal Christian, but also, his grandfather founded the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World Church in Cleveland. Later, he became a part of the 3 percent Nation of Gods and Earths. But now Yisrael is a studying Nuwaupian, an adherent to a spiritual system that is
much more of a philosophical system than a religion. Yisrael says, “All religions are correct, but they have bits and pieces of the puzzle. Bits and pieces of truth are in every one. Each one is like stair steps to knowledge.”

Nuwaupian, according to Yisrael, means “New-Being.” It also means “New-Nubian,” and most Nuwaupians are Black. Nuwaup as a spiritual or philosophical system is a vast body of information and is difficult to limit to a set of core beliefs. But, a minor familiarity with Hermetic Philosophy, Hebrewism, Islam and the beliefs of the 5 percent Nation of Gods and Earths is a healthy start.

When asked what his core beliefs were, he answered, “The word was with God, now here’s the word, brother. I am a god. Not the God but a god. If God created you, doesn’t that make you part of him?”

Nuwaup is reminiscent of the race conscious beliefs of the Nation of Islam and the 5 percent Nation of Gods and Earths. This is because it descends from the same root as those movements, a root called Moorish Science, brought to the United States by a man named Timothy Drew, later known as Noble Drew Ali. The beliefs of this spiritual system were that Black people were Moors, who ruled Spain from 711 A.D. to 1492 A.D. and that Moorish Science was the spiritual system practiced by those Moors.

“I’m Moorish. The biggest threat is that you (Black people) would find out you were Moors. The United States used to pay taxes to Morocco,” says Yisrael. Morocco was named for the Moors of antiquity who occupied the area centuries ago.

An example of their race conscious beliefs is the emphasis placed on identifying Biblical, Torae and Qur’anic figures as Black. When asked about Jesus Christ, Yisrael responded, “God sent down a Hebrew. You can call him a Jew or a Nazarene or whatever. But, God didn’t send down no Greek.” This is a quick reference to famed Pan-African Studies teacher, Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannan, which Yisrael used to validate his claims.

In fact, Yisrael says that everything he teaches can be validated by research and much of the information he teaches. It can easily be authenticated in classes taken in the Department of Pan-African Studies.

Yisrael says, “We (Black people) are too lazy to do the investigation. You can ALCHEMY your mind. You can be resurrected. Your worst death is your mental death. Mental death leads to spiritual death. If you are not spiritually well, you can’t even be physically well.”

The Nuwaupian information that was once available at small African book
stores is no longer there. Nuwaupians have removed public access to the teachings of their spiritual leader, Dr. Malachi Z. Yorke. When asked about how one could access this restricted information, which ranges from explanations of Biblical verses (according to Yisrael, the word Bible is an acronym that stands for Biological Instruction Before Leaving Earth) to incorporating ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) rituals into daily practices to extraterrestrial visitors (most call them angels), Yisrael said, “They can see me. That’s a start. We make Xerox copies. I live to teach.”

Islam, Hebrewism, Hermetic philosophy, Freemasonry and conspiracy theories of every type are taught in the lessons of Nuwaupu. A general philosophy of Nuwaupu is to never stop learning. The Islamic saying, “Ye should learn from the cradle to the grave,” was adopted by the Nuwaupian community and should be adopted by anyone calling themselves a “believer.” But as Yisrael asks, “What is belief? Belief is not knowing. When your child comes inside in the summer and you ask him, ‘Is the door closed?’ is it sufficient for him to respond with, ‘I believe so?’ You’d have to know the door was closed to be safe. The same should go for our understanding of God.”
Our department offers an undergraduate major leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree and a minor in the College of Arts and Sciences. The developing discipline of African studies includes Pan-African Studies (or Diaspora Studies) as one of its primary emphases. Our major and minor course sequences are structured to provide an in-depth study of history, language, philosophy, education, literature, art, music, science, sociology, and other subjects as they relate to people of African descent throughout the world. These courses also expose students to theoretical, practical, and domestic and national issues facing African Americans. Students are encouraged to use their intellectual skills to bring about better organization and development within the African American community.

Students majoring in any field—from Business or Education to the Humanities and Fine and Professional Arts—are encouraged to consider Pan-African Studies as a minor.

The PAS curriculum includes courses which cover a broad spectrum of the Pan-African experience. Its purpose is to provide students with basic information and questions which will lead to further research, study, and analysis. The curriculum also seeks to investigate the African connection and/or influences among other ethnic groups, particularly Native Americans and Latin Americans, and the extent to which these may be reciprocal.

Please find below a list of general courses offered in the Department of Pan-African Studies. (For available courses each semester, see General University Catalog and Schedule of Classes for each semester.)

PAN-AFRICAN STUDIES (PAS) for placement and credit in foreign language courses see Arts and Sciences--Foreign Language requirement--placement and credit.
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