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Editor's Notes

I am very excited to welcome you to the fall 2003 issue of UHURU, CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS. This issue is filled with life and good spirit. It is a celebration of our diverse cultures.

The article "Salt and Pepper" analyzes diverse dating. What's unique about this article is that the writer interviews students about interracial dating. Each person offers their opinion in the culmination of four differing views.

"The Recipe for Power" is an article on the culture of the Black United Students organization. Written by a current board member, this article is sure to uplift your soul, inspire you and motivate you to increase your awareness and take action.

As always, the KUUMBA section is an impressive array of submissions, exploding with creativity! For the first time, UHURU introduces a feature poet to this section. This issue's feature poet, Roderic Reece, shares a unique blend of themes in his works.

In addition, we give you a special edition 2004 pull-out calendar. It features faculty, staff and students in the Department of Pan-African Studies and their passions.

The compelling and dynamic articles are complimented by a collection of intense photos and eye-catching, powerful design work. The staff has worked very hard to deliver something enlightening and distinct.

I am very excited to present to you, Cultural Expressions.

Enjoy!

Shenika Oliver
Editor/General Manager
Providing educational, cultural and social programs that relates to the goals and aspirations of black students.
the recipe for power

The Culture of Black United Students

Black United Students was formed on May 21, 1968, by the Black students on campus because of different injustices that were prevalent on campus at the time. Some of those injustices included the fact that Blacks were not learning anything about their history as a people in this country. They had no student organization for support, and they were not even permitted to live on campus.

Something had to be done, and fortunately, there were several leaders who had the dream and drive to do something. The students organized and marched off campus and demanded changes be made in their favor. Due to the monies granted by the state for minority attendance, this was an effective form of protest. Their patience and persistence paid off because they eventually obtained a new organization called Black United Students. Eventually, they acquired the Institute of African American Affairs (IAAA) and the Center for Pan-African Culture (CPAC). In 1976, the department of Pan-African Studies was formed as an extension of the IAAA and CPAC. Through their struggles, Black United Students has consistently tried to be an organization where all students can expect the major issues concerning them will be addressed and handled accordingly. The hard work and dedication of the past Black United Students executive boards are definitely present in the hearts and minds of the current executive board. This will remain in the hearts and minds of the future boards as Black United Students continues to grow.

As a new school year starts here at Kent State University, a new Black United Students’ executive board is setting its goals for the year. Vice President Nicole Miller put it simply when she said the goal for Black United Students this year was to “unify” the Black students on campus. With all of the different “Black-centered-groups” on campus, it is important for them to be on the same page. After all, they are all trying to do the same thing ultimately, which is to educate the Black community on Kent State’s campus. This year’s Black United Students board is dedicated to unify ALL Blacks on Kent State’s campus. No matter what your interests are, whether it be athletic, poetry, Greek, musical, fashion, media or anything else, one thing will remain the same among all “Black-centered groups” on campus: You are still Black when you wake up every morning.

Everything that affects the Black community in this country directly affects each and every one of us. There really is no time to be bickering amongst ourselves about trivial things, such as whose organization is better than whose or what event is more important to attend on a certain night. We are all a part of Black United Students and as long as we can’t get by the trivial things we will never be able to take on the things that really matter, such as the all white Undergraduate Student Senate, affirmative action reforms, the negative stereotypes of Black youth or the fact that some teachers in our Department of Pan-African Studies have not published articles in a dangerous while. To address such issues, we must be Black students that are united in ONE cause, which is the ultimate education and empowerment of ourselves.
join the

UHUHU
CREW

Apply for the following positions:

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You will be responsible for article ideas and organizing staff writers. You must be organized, reliable, possess communication skills, enthusiasm and personality.

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You are responsible for the layout and design of the magazine each semester. You work closely with a team of designers and photographers. You must have knowledge and experience with Quark Xpress. You must be creative, have ideas, vision and enthusiasm.

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Shoot photos relative to expressing article or story subject matter.

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You are responsible for designing the layout for articles in the magazine. You must have knowledge of Quark Xpress. You work closely with the staff writers and photographers when creating a layout style for the article. You must be design savvy and possess great creativity.

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The current Black United Students’ executive board is highly aware of the problems and concerns of the Black majority on campus. The current board is constantly formulating plans to address these problems and concerns while promoting education to the Black students on Kent State’s campus. The aspirations for the future boards are hopes of more ambitious, young Black students to become more involved with campus and forcing the school to realize the intelligence, power potential and beauty of the Black mind in this world—a Black mind that continues to be attacked with the overdose of stereotypes of drugs, sex and thought-numbing entertainment.

We are a race of innovators, entrepreneurs, thought-provoking entertainers, critical analysts and thinkers, athletically gifted, musically in-tuned, poetic geniuses and other forms of intellectual greats. But we live in a country where we are looked at as “sex-crazy” athletes, “not-to-be-taken-serious” comedians, violent gang-minded rappers, economically-dependent, uneducated sex objects and a group of highly sensitive Black people who call each other “ignorant persons,” better known as “niggaz.” We have the potential to change the whole way the world looks and thinks about us as a people.

Martin, Malcolm, Jesse, Fred, Bobby and Huey were all great leaders. But their time is past and it is time for a new group of leaders to emerge. Black United Students at Kent State University is a great place to groom the next national leader of the Black community in America. All one has to do to see it is look a little closer at situations that look a little funny, such as graduation rates, SAT scores, Blacks in prison, drugs in our neighborhoods, AIDS, our representation in government, our vote and the list could go on.

To be a leader in 2003, you do not have to sing Negro spirituals and march or dress in black, grab a gun and quote the Constitution. Those tactics worked for the time they were used in. But new laws and restrictions call for new action. Black United Students is aware that the greatest weapon we have and have always had was our minds. We must master that weapon to organize plans to access power, to carry the future of the Black American.

The time to start organizing is NOW...not yesterday, not tomorrow, not in one hour, but right now. The majority wants to maintain control, so they will make sure we will get a small piece of the pie to keep us happy. They will give you a little money here and there to keep you smiling while they still keep you in that dependent state. They might let an artist own a record label and make a lot of money, but they own the distribution label which owns you and a couple other labels. They let you play in their league, but they own the league. They will let you sell drugs long enough for you to be rich, riding on “24s” spinning. Then they will arrest you, lock you up and make you contribute to pockets of rich white people. And all the while they are laughing at you in their yachts listening to Eminem.

Black people wake up! Don’t settle for one piece; take the whole thing! Take back your talents and profit to feed your own family. Black United Students is here to help you realize your potential; to turn it into progress, which will manifest into power. But the only way to get the power we so rightly deserve is to sharpen the tool that lies in between our ears. It starts here.

Come to a Black United Students meeting. They are held every other Tuesday. If you cannot make it, come to a Soul Patrol meeting. They are held every first Thursday of the month and they watch a movie. If you cannot fit any of that into your schedule, come by the Black United Students office on the second floor of the Student Center (rm. 232). If you cannot do that, call the office (330-672-7985). If you don’t have a phone, talk to someone you know is involved with BUS. We want to be truly united, and we can only do that with you. No excuse is a good one to not get involved.

As we come through college, let’s not forget who we are. We must not forget the potential we have. The only way to obtain the power we deserve is to realize the potential we have and put it toward progress. The recipe for power is simply to realize you have the ability (potential). Put your ability to work (progress). And watch your opinions, bank accounts and status grow (power).

The culture of Black United Students is more than just waving “fight the power.” Dead Prez-listening, power-tripping Black kids. We are preparing for leadership. We are the ones doing something when somebody says “somebody should do something.” We are the future leaders in this leaderless society. We are united. We are a part of what you are. Are you a part of us? Are you a leader or a follower? Are you a slave or do you determine your own destiny? Are you a leader? If you are, we will talk sometime. If you are, I will hear your ideas, see your face and respect your opinions. If you are, do something other than complaining and change will occur. Black United Student meetings are every other Tuesday in Oscar Ritchie Hall in the Lecture Hall on the first floor at 7:30 p.m. Now you know. No excuses. See you there...LEADER. ☐

“Now you know. No excuses. See you there...LEADER.”
Diversity’s Destructive Divide

different birds, different feathers

How diversity is breaking apart our common bonds and destroying our identity.

I remember once scrapping with a classmate on the playground during recess when I was younger. What started the fight was probably meaningless. Nonetheless, a teacher ran over and pulled us apart. “You boys need to work out your differences!” she exclaimed, as she led us off, an ear gripped tightly in each hand. I am reminded of this experience because of the underlying concept it voices: differences divide.

Ask any person in conflict management and they will tell you: One of the most basic principles of peoples’ interactions is to work out differences. It’s the most common sense place to start when ensuring problems don’t arise and people get along. Examples of this play themselves out in life everyday from the smallest levels to the largest ones. On the simplest scale it can make it hard for people to get along. This can erupt in something small like a playground fist fight or even larger. Many have seen the violent eruptions that happen at soccer matches between rival fans.

On a larger scale, and at its worst, nations (often fractions of nations) have torn each other apart over differences. Many times these are differences that run very deep in a society, ones of a cultural
that people share with each other. This is a common sense fact which has been working fervently to imbed this concept of diversity within the student's mind, eventually diffusing into the mainstream public. After all, one can see it on any college campus, the word diversity, a thousands times over. It's on billboards, flyers, in class curriculum and almost every speech someone in higher education makes these days. "We are diverse!" everyone wants to cry. We love how the word just rolls off our tongues. We use the word anywhere we can. I have heard a guy just the other day talking about how diverse his shoes were, his shoes! However, we never learn why diversity is such a great thing. We are simply absorbed into this collective and into thinking the word itself, diversity, is just a really great thing. Of course the concept gets taught more in depth in classes designed with diversity in mind, where people probably go by into greater detail, but how many people take those courses? Even less people than you, actually, know anything about diversity. Why not? Because it is so inherently perfect? Not even close. In its most literal definition from the dictionary itself, to the conscious meaning everyone knows, diversity means a plethora of different things. If you had a painting with diverse colors, it would obviously have many differing colors and shades. In a social context, a diverse body of people would include many different characteristics of each person. And when we talk about diversity today, that is exactly what we mean-different people. Different people with different ethnicities, religions, creeds and colors, different cultures, languages, habits and practices. This is what we mean by diversity today. This is what the educational constructivists strive for. And if they ever read, they'd realize they were destructorists in every sense of the word. How? I have the perfect poster child for their model plan of diversity. But it's too late and gone. What was diversity's poster child? Yugoslavia. That's right! A country with different ethnicities, religions, creeds and colors, different cultures, languages, habits and practices. Different but not true, they divide, destroy and bloody tore each other apart. You see, many fail to realize that these are very personal differences going to the core of what makes up human beings. Although it's bad enough when nations go to war against each other, it doesn't even compare with what happened when a country implodes upon itself, rotting at the core, all due to diversity. Because again, differences are just a great thing. Of course we can see how diversity is rampant, all over the world. Even in this country. We have Russia. Who is in Russia? Russians! And they have far less problems. Ahh, who else is in Russia? The Chaydren. And who are the Chaydren? People of different ethnicities, religions, creeds and colors, different cultures, languages, habits and practices. The terrorist incidents alone detail ongoing problems as Russians try to deal with people different from themselves. Again, in all these instances, the result was a whole lot of violence split up, cracked in half. Why? Because differences divide people; they do not unite. Diversity is nothing more than the culmination of differences.

I could go on with example after example of how, throughout history, differences that were not worked out caused nations to fail and people to make. It makes one stop and think. You always hear about history repeating itself because people fail to warn from its lessons. This is a prime example of just that. You'd think people would realize that differences are bad and work to eliminate them. For a long time, many people did just that. The reality is that diversity is a key thing is a new way. For quite some time now, we have not been that diverse and thank God. But now, with this onslaught by those who educate the masses, the impact is anyone's guess. So now, it's break down the fallacies behind the reasons people give for why diversity is such a good thing. People argue that different people have different ideas, different skills and abilities, different perspectives, and that's what has given America its strengths. This is simply not true. While there are differences which are valuable is simple quantity. Look at it this way. Let's say you have a town of Waltz with (Anglo Protestants). In fact, let's make it even more. All male, all heterosexual WASPs. At this point, every one is pretty much the same in all the ways I said would otherwise cause problems if they were different. You don't get any less diverse than group of people. Now let's say this is a modest-sized town of 25,000 people. Even now, you are going to have teachers and lawyers, doctors and police. You will have plumbers and carpenters, janitors and waiters. You will have Democrats and Republicans, guys who are pro-choice or pro-life. You will have people who believe one way and others who believe completely differently. You will have a wide variety of different ideas, different skills and abilities, different perspectives. The truth is you don't need one specific culture, race or religion to offer that, simply a large amount of minds to create it. And get a city of 100,000 people or even more, a country of 100 million, and you inherently have all the diversity you will ever need, despite the other differences educators would like to work in. It's like a supermarket. By its very nature it is diverse. It's not going to have aisle after aisle of one item; it has literally millions. Just by its quantity alone, there is diversity. There is simply no need to artifically try to create more. This is the fallacy created by those who push diversity. They take the basic principles that already exist in "natural" diversity and attempt to apply them to the array of differences they would like to create. Now, how does this all pertain to America? Well, the jury is still out. Contrary to what you might think, the United States is not a diverse country, at least not how you might think. For instance, one might say to the Roman Empire was diverse. With respect to people it is true, and culture it certainly was not. All the differences I describe as negative were ruthlessly stomped out by the Romans. As with other rulers and conquerors, the Romans knew these differences would cause problems, and so they sought to eliminate them. And eliminate they did. As a result, most things in the empire were patently Roman. People spoke Latin from Britannia all the way to Judea, from the north of Europe to the north of Africa. Roman architecture, roads, dress, culture, all the same, from the heart of the great city to the outer most provinces. If there was one thing all these places had in common, it was the Roman culture in all its entirety, spread over three continents. The same is true of the British
Celebrating over 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.

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GET ON THE BUS

12 UHURU magazine
Empire. Tea time rang at the same time of the day, in an empire that stretched across the globe. "Make the world England" was their cry.

And America is no different. What this shows is you can have many different races, but while maintaining integrity through one culture. That is the American way. Of course, don't confuse this with sub-cultures or even heritage. Obviously, if you go to other parts of the country, you will see that people do things a little differently. And with respect to heritage, that will add a bit as well. I like being Italian and all the signature characteristics it brings. It makes me an individual. However these “differences” are in no way as significant as the larger ones which divide people on a regular basis.

Instead, here in America we have what is referred to as the melting pot. There are many influences which have helped to create it. And each person or group which has come to our country rather than simply retaining their differences, has instead offered them up to the melting pot, assimilated into our American culture, making it one, yet at the same time patently unique. We like Monday night football and the Final Four of the NCAA. We listen to quality rock-n-roll and hip-hop and sometimes even mix the two. We have a fairly assertive sounding accent in the north, some twang in the south and somewhere in between out west, yet we nonetheless converse in English. There are countless contributions from different groups which make our culture the American way. But it still is our way. And “our” is a word which describes unity. We have common things which make us American.

The truth is most places are not diverse. Look at China. Do you know who’s in China? Chinese people. Guess what they speak there? Chinese. The minority populations there are utterly minimal. Guess who’s in India and what they speak? Indian. Mexico, Russia, they’re all the same. These are places, like most others, which have certain similar characteristics which make them unique. The more you deviate from that, the less consistency you have.

As Americans we have common bonds and similarities that unite us. Similarities...not differences. However, there are many in our midst who are fervently working to destroy as many of these common bonds as they can to replace them with characteristics we aren’t even familiar with. Should they get their way, there will be so much diversity, so many differences, you won’t be able to identify with others maybe only a few towns away. Again, we have certain characteristics which make us who we are. What if they took all those away? If we keep becoming more and more diverse, there will soon be no unifying bond by which to hold us together. Imagine asking people: “What ‘is’ an American?” And then, because we are now so different, the most anyone could say is: “Gee, I don’t know what makes up an American.” Because those who push this artificial diversity on us will have taken away every definition which makes an American who we are—Americans. Taking away the similarities we have, shattering the bonds that bring us together, does nothing more than break us into pieces. Furthermore, by taking the characteristics that make us American and violently scrambling them, mixing them up, destroys any identity we have left. Give diversity a good decade or so, and you won’t have any idea what an American is. We will all be so different we won’t identify with anyone.

Think back to the basic model set up for you at the beginning of this article. The principle doesn’t change. Differences divide; similarities unite. And more importantly, America is no exception. One should not think, “Well...we’re the great U.S. of A; we can handle this.” Because it is simply not true. History has repeated itself in this area many times over and is perfectly capable of doing so again. After all, didn’t we already fight one civil war? Why did we fight it? Because the north and the south couldn’t work out their differences. The list is endless, even in this country. The race riots alone reaffirm this principle.

“Birds of a feather flock together.” Sadly, many people tend to refer to this as simply a cliché. In university, I have also heard disdain towards the saying. I think many people don’t like it solely based on the absolute validity it holds. They wish it were nothing more than an overly-heard saying. They would like to belittle it in a futile attempt to demean its obvious truths. Cliché or not, this saying has been applicable since the dawn of time. Ever since life started, millions and millions of years ago, animals and then humans came together under like conditions, not different ones. This is as fundamental as it gets. It has been a core principle since the beginning, and attempting to change something so integral to our foundation is naive, foolish and patently destructive.

Diversity is a Trojan horse, people, and at this very moment someone somewhere is trying to sell this faulty bill of goods. After all, we have enough problems dealing with the differences we already have in this country. And these people want to add more? Are you kidding me? Well, I would rather us not have another civil war. I don’t want us to end up like Yugoslavia, 10 or 20 years down the road. I like the common bonds I share with my fellow Americans. I like the things that bring us together, not the institution of an idea designed to break us apart. That is diversity’s destructive divide.
Staff Writers

The ability to write an article in accordance to AP style guidelines. The Editor must approve the article idea, but the writer is encouraged to think creatively. Compensation for published articles.

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In 1915, a pair of Oberlin graduates opened a settlement house in an area of Cleveland called "The Roaring Third," just at the corner of E. 38th and Central Avenue. With foresight and vision, Russell and Rowena Woodham Jelliffe established a place where people of different races, creeds and religions could find a common ground, where common ventures are sought. The Jelliffes discovered in the early years that the arts provided the perfect common ground, and the work of the Playhouse Settlement began. They held high standards of excellence in the arts, a standard we strive to maintain, not for the sake of the excellence, but because we know, as the Jelliffes did, that pursuing excellence demands the promise of individual potential.

The early '20s saw a large number of African Americans move into an area from the south. Resisting some pressure to exclude their new neighbors, the Jelliffes insisted that all races were welcome. What was then called the Playhouse Settlement quickly became a magnet for some of the best African American artists of the day. Dancers, print makers, actors, writers all...
found a place where they could practice their crafts.

Reflecting the strength of the Black influence on its development, the Playhouse Settlement was officially renamed Karamu House in 1941. Karamu is a Swahili word meaning "a place of joyful gathering."

Throughout the years, Karamu House has gone through many changes, some profound. With the retirement of the Jelfifes in 1965, and the social shifts of the '60s and '70s, Karamu was predictably impacted in many ways: diminished funds, increasing political and social urgency, and uncertain purpose. But, people still poured into Karamu drawn by the energy of a new political and cultural presence for African Americans.

Today, Karamu offers art experiences for people of all ages through a variety of programs. The three primary program areas are the Early Childhood Development Center, the Center of Arts and Education and the Karamu Performing Arts Theatre. They have classes for children, an active seniors program and much, much more. Through its many programs, Karamu explores a broad range of the African American experience and invites everyone to share in its treasures.

Across the country there are precious few cities with cultural resources specifically dedicated to the African American experience. Still fewer have institutions with the breadth of programming Karamu House offers. And no city but Cleveland has all this and an 80-year history of tending the fruitful ground of African American cultural expression.

KARAMU KIDS

DAYCARE:
- Early Childhood Development Center
- Full Day Care Services to Preschoolers

YOUTH CLASSES:
- Ages 4 to 6:
  - Dance/Ballet
  - Upper Dance
  - Dramatic Storytelling
  - Annie Mae Arts & Crafts
  - Art Studio-34
- Ages 7 to 9:
  - Drawing
  - Art Room Ballet
  - Upper Dance Drama
  - Annie Mae Drama
  - Arena Theatre
  - String Instrument
- Ages 10 and up:
  - Drama
  - Annie Mae Drawing
  - Art Room Dance Jazz or Modern
  - Upper Dance Modeling Class
  - Arena Theatre String Instrument

YOUTH THEATRE:
- A Balancing Act--Nov. 1 to Nov. 16, 2003
  The story of several young people’s battle with drug and alcohol abuse. Each scene has a power and statement all its own, with action ranging from intimate to frightening. Perfect for parents, teachers and students to see together. Best suited for youth ages 8 thru 17.
  Holiday joy for the Christmas season, a program of joy for each family member
- Deep Blue Funk--Nov. 2 to Nov. 17, 2003--Annies Mae Theatre
  This drama presents young and adult audiences with the life stories of teenagers speaking in their own voices about the experiences of becoming parents while adolescents struggling with too much too soon takes center stage. The innocence, anger, love and fear captured in this sensitive and revealing drama transcend the boundaries of the features local African-American neighborhood and speak of vital truths about coming of age-truth which will resonate with young people from all backgrounds and neighborhoods.

FALL 2003 WORKSHOPS AND ACTIVITIES
- Drama Class
  Learning how to relax. Trusting is a precondition for acting. Learning the artistic disciplines. Criticism: how to learn from it and use it. Freedom: actors must learn to be free from physical and psychological inhibition and learn to enjoy that freedom.
- Line Dancing
  Learn the latest in Urban Contemporary dance.
- Salsa Dance Instructions
  Learn the Latin dances that are hot today.
- Drawing Art Class
  Learning how to manipulate media, techniques and art processes to create a series of art works, to critique works of art as part of the artist process and to understand the work of others.
- Advance Theater
  The course presents dictions with articulation and liberation of how to use the voice.
  Agility on how to develop dexterity and coordination.
- Salsa Social Night Out
- Ceramics
- Seniors & Retirees
  Come in and relax with friends and perhaps make some new ones with a friendly game of cards.
- Monthly Poetry/Comedy Slams
- Particular Favorite of Heaven: The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano
  Olaudah Equiano was born in 1745 of the Ibo ethnic group in West Africa. Equiano was kidnapped and sold into the Atlantic Slave Trade as a young boy. He survived the perils of enslavement, separation from his homeland and the dangers of the Middle Passage. Olaudah eventually learned mathematics, how to read and write, and became a naturalist. Eventually he purchased his free-
dom and became an influential spokesman in the fight to abolish slavery around the world. Although he assimilated into European culture, he never forgot nor abandoned his Ibo traditions and beliefs.

This play highlights the cultural life of the Ibo people with music, dancing, masks and colorful scenery. Students will identify with Ibo culture and see how one young man mastered a new world after he was ripped from his original one. A wonderful visual experience, Particular Favorite of Heaven is adapted from Olaudah Equiano’s autobiography.

- Langston Listens to America
Most of America remembers Langston Hughes as an icon of the artistic and intellectual achievement of the Harlem Renaissance. However, he also used his poetic genius to speak about significant figures in African American History as well as key social issues that shaped an entire culture. These poems capture the essence of the conflicts, contributions and triumphs of Black Americans from the departure from Africa, through emancipation from slavery and up to World War II.

Information adapted from http://www.karamu.com

above: Deidre Perry prepares for a class in one of the art classrooms at Karamu House. After-school programs at Karamu House are targeted towards children ages 8 to 18 years old.
Blues been good to me
like the shade of my family tree
like a boomerang that won't come black
like the path of an old black cat

Give me five, black soul man
should've slapped his face, with the back
of my hand
but I just kept the beat, at the back
of the band
'cause on the front bus, is where I'll
make my stand

Blues been good to me
like the shade of my family tree
like a boomerang that won't come black
like the path of an old black cat

took her home, a half past three
that girl's daddy looked like Robert E. Lee
was he so blind or too dumb to see
it's 1999 and he didn't own me

I was stopped by The Man on suspicion
of a jack
put his foot, in the middle
of my back
6 months later I was still
young and black
but got a check from the county,
with a boomerang attached

Blues been good to me
like the shade of my family tree
like a boomerang that did come black
like the path of this young black cat

Roderic Reece
□burstofVerse.com
**The First Black**

I was the first black to buy a kumquat on the 9th of December in the town of Niwot.

I was the first black to run down the street and be stopped by a cop and not be beat.

I was the first black inside of your home but as I recall I was not left alone.

I was the first black to move from the hood then move back in then out for good.

I was the first black to say “Gee Whiz” and have to ask what racism is.

I was the first black to not be typecast now you decide if I’ll be the last.

---

**Separation Anxiety**

I used to sleep at night until they started to fight so now that I am grown I may always sleep alone.

He had some goals and dreams ends to all his means but no one would say if we were in his way.

She would curse his name in vain and blame me for the rain as far as she could see he was just like me.

I may never understand how woman puts up with man or how man ceases to be when a part of family so.

We may never be much better or wear a Cosby sweater but somewhere in between I hope we’re much less mean.

---

**Often the Victum**

If you’re often the victim then I have no doubt you live outside-in not inside-out.

You do have a choice and if you so choose to let them win guess who will lose?

Roderic Reece

BurstofVerse.com
DEATH CORN ROW

Crime fries  
under Texas sun  
mimes tried  
by legislation  
crime thrives  
at execution  
lines lie  
on the Constitution  
dimes buy  
a way to Washington

time flies  
when having fun

Roderic Reece  
BurstofVerse.com

HELL NO, WE WON'T GO

Sign a petition  
Picket a show  
Show the fat cats you can’t be bought  
Save your money  
Join a boycott  
Make a stand or stage a sit-in  
Choose or Lose  
Don’t quit ’til we win  
Pick an amendment or constitutional right  
Peaceful Protest  
of the left or the right  
Show up in droves or stay home that day  
Power in numbers  
Equal Work or Equal Pay  
Demand a recount or stage a coupé  
When they cheer  
stand up and boo  
Hit ’em where it hurts  
kick ’em in the shin  
and if they don’t like it  
then do it again

but if you haven’t a cause  
or even a clue  
then just stand behind me  
and  
do what I do

Roderic Reece  
BurstofVerse.com
Injustice

Within minutes, I was in the stall of the cinema’s restroom guiding Michael into my valley. He nibbled at me and explored every crevice. I stuffed toilet paper in my mouth to diffuse my moans, which were growing louder. He flickered his tongue from side to side, sending me into convulsions. By this time, biting on toilet paper wasn’t working and my screams began to slip out, so I flushed the toilet to distract the sound. The orgasm Michael gave me had me light-headed, and I could barely walk. He guided me to our seats in the theatre just in time to hear Eve yell, “Who drank my apple juice?” in the movie BarberShop.

After we left the theatre, we headed back to my apartment. Michael poured us a glass of wine, and I led him to the bedroom. After we finished our wine, I gently mounted him and slid his thick manhood into my warmth. I started a slow-grinding rhythm as if I were singing a song. But, he’d reach the high note tonight. He felt good, the pleasure overwhelmed me, and I increased my speed. I paused for a second to turn around, carefully keeping him firmly inside my walls. He gasped for air, and I started my movements, riding him from the backside. The feeling began to overcome him because I could feel myself paralyzing him with the sweetness of my gorge.

He found the energy to sit up and enter me from the back. I began to moan uncontrollably as every one of his strokes spoke to me. With a hand on each hip, he guided me like a ship, accelerating his strokes until we reached the dock. I lost my breath when I screamed Michael’s name with his last thrust.

The morning after, I received a phone call that my grandmother was terribly ill. Within an hour, I booked a flight for later that afternoon, heading back to my hometown to be with her. I had spent a week with my family, and my grandmother was doing much better. I hadn’t talked to Michael since I got off the plane. But, he was on my mind. I don’t think he knew how much I cared for him. Plus, the sex was incredible. When I was home and back in my apartment, all I wanted to do is call him so he could come over. His machine picked up and I left a message that I was back in town and needed to see him. I finally fell asleep waiting on Michael’s call. I had a busy day at work anyway.

After a long and exhausting week, I was slow to respond to the alarm clock. I was running late to work. Usually, I review my cases every morning before getting started, but I was unprepared this morning.

I sat down and requested the first case be called. My heart stopped when I heard Michael’s name. My eyes got blurry as I scrambled to find the case folder. An instant migraine struck when I tried hard to read through my bluriness. Then, I looked up and stared directly into the Michael’s face. I read: State vs. Michael Nates, first degree murder. I was staggered by the charges. First degree murder was the most serious, because it was deliberate and premeditated.

I didn’t want to hear the details or read any more about the case. I immediately removed myself from the room because I was sitting in the front row, in all black, in my own box, as the honorable Judge Shelly Monroe.
**Mother Nature...**

Who is this Mother Nature? Is Mother Nature apart of God, or is God a part of Mother Nature? We see thousands upon thousands of men, women and children, who are mostly innocent, dying as victims of this notorious mother nature. But, at whose authority does this mother of nature act? Our corrupted government controls our crooked police, our corrupted government is controlled by our greedy congress, or our above-the-law president our above-the-law president is controlled by the non-exiting, we-the-people controls greedy congress. But even with such a lost faith, we still have a pawn in their political game to lay blame on. But, with this Mother Nature, who steals so many lives, who are where do we-the-people take our complaints to? As I watched the news show a flood destroying countless amounts of precious lives, it frustrates me because I know of no one to take my grievance to. There are earthquakes in China, hurricanes in Florida, forest fires in 'Cally, and then there is those tornadoes that are ripping down garages in Mexico’s alleys, with no one to blame. A man robbed a bank, and to prison he must go, a dead-beat-father, fathers child, and child-support will be for sure, but lightening strikes this same mother and child dead, and the blame is quickly swept underneath some unknown door. As I sit here contemplating on who should bear the blame, above my head I hear a violent roar of thunder, and I must admit, it quickly made me wonder; about the moon being replaced by the sun, rain replace with snow, winter by summer, spring by fall, and day with night. It is no longer a mystery to me; I am sure, without a doubt, that God controls Mother Nature. There is no difference between Mother Nature and any other creation that God has created. Behind every death, there is a new birth. Behind every tragedy, there are triumphs, sadness, and their happiness. For everyone who is hurt, there is someone out there who is well. Therefore, if or when we complain about God’s winters, we will have to complain about His summers. For everyone who has been killed in a snowstorm, we would have to complain about those who were born on a bright and sunny day. Rainbows are so beautiful, but if we complain about the thunderstorms, which brings about the rainbows, were then do we stand? As God gives, God can surely take away. I remember the phrase that a wise science and history teacher used to say, “Whatever you do, don’t you dare question Mother Nature.” But, he should have said, “Whatever you do don’t you dare question God.”

Benjamin Luttrel III
cultural expression.

**I AM**

I AM THE SEA THAT COLORS YOUR EYES
THE THOUGHT THAT MAKES ONE BROW TO RISE
I AM THE ROUNDEDNESS IN YOUR FACE
THAT GELLED EACH FEATURE IN IT'S PLACE
I AM THE MOLD THAT PREP'D YOUR FRAME
I AM THE FIRST WHO BORE YOUR NAME
I AM THE FULLNESS OF YOUR LIPS
THE POET IN YOUR FINGERTIPS
I AM THE HUE THAT BROWNS YOUR SKIN
SO LIGHTLY STAINED WITH MELANIN
I AM THE VIGOR IN YOUR FIGHT
I AM THE ROOT THAT BARS YOUR

HEIGHT
I AM THE STRENGTH BEHIND YOUR FEARS
I AM YOUR STAY IN GROWING YEARS
I AM THE WORDS OF STRONG ADVICE
I AM THE PATH WHICH LEADS TO CHRIST
I AM THE POWER THAT YOU EXUDE
I'M IN YOUR SPARTAN ATTITUDE
I AM THE HEART THAT MAKES YOU BRAVE
THE SOURCE OF ALL THE LOVE YOU CRAVE
AND WHEN YOU WED, WHO WILL YOU SEE?
SOME GENTLEMAN WHO'S JUST LIKE ME
I AM THE ONE WHO LOVES YOU SO
I AM THE ONE YOU STILL DON'T KNOW

I AM THE THING YOU'VE NEVER HAD
MY BABY GIRL, I AM YOUR DAD

Written for Erykah Marie Howard,
Daughter of Don Erik Gaddis
Move Your Boots on their Legs!

You stood on their loyal legs since last years.
Their legs crashed for decades now.
Their heels stressed impatiently by you.
No songs of democracy heard.
The boots you wear have stiff nails.
Enough is enough to these creatures.
Move out your boots on their legs!
Therefore, they can stand and walk again like you.

Wash their clothes, legs, eyes, and ears.
No Voting, Eating, Working, harvesting and better salaries.
Eliminate poverty, ignorance and prejudices to these people.
Move your heavily boots on their legs.
All of them overbleeding and sucked by hungry ticks.
Set them free from compact conditions.
Your boots’ soles hot like hot sand dunes.
Put off your booths, set them free!
Move your heavy boots on their legs;
Come on! They are people like you!
Since independence no one of them walks like you.

Mayunga N’Ntangalo
A New Love

Rob whispered my name each time he entered me. And my small frame curved to his lengthy manhood with every thrust. I was severely dehydrated and thirsty only for what Rob could give me. My clamped walls were holding tightly, absorbing every drop. Life was good with Rob, but was great with Chris. Weave romantic dinners, stimulating conversation and good sex. Chris doesn’t compare to Rob sexually, but he can rupture an orgasm – keeping me senseless for hours afterwards. With Chris, the imagination is in full bloom. Creativity is never a question. Once, Chris penetrated me with his fingers on a subway ride, sending me into convulsions right as the doors opened and passengers began to enter and exit our subway car. I’ve ridden him in a taxi, moving my body in snake-like motions.; we gave the driver a $20 tip afterwards. Chris even spontaneously embraced me from the back one day as I was doing laundry, exploring my valley and enjoying my warmth as I sat atop the washing machine.

It was obvious why Chris was my fiancé and Rob was just my lover. But when Rob and I ran into Chris one night as we went to dinner, you could understand why I was sick to my stomach. I actually puked immediately after Chris and I made eye contact, right there on the sidewalk. Not to my surprise, Rob laughed at Chris and diminished all of his pride with one question, “Did you really think a white man could satisfy Val?” I just closed my eyes and hoped Chris could find it in his heart to forgive me. Rob started to help me clean up while Chris quickly walked away.

Later, I walked into our apartment only to find Chris watching TV. I slowly walked past him and went to take a long, hot shower. When I stepped out of the bathroom, Chris was sitting on our bed with tears in his eyes. I slowly walked towards him and kissed him. Then I undressed him, simultaneously mounting his manhood. I began a steady grind slowly working his hormones into a passion. I worked my kisses to his mid section and I took him into my mouth. I’d never worked so hard to ignite him and watched his body begin to shake because of the love I was giving him.

We never talked about Rob. Chris said since I came back, I must have chosen him, which was true. Chris was good to me, had a successful career and was security for me. However, things began to take a turn when Chris unexpectedly lost his job. Chris took it very hard and I began to feel my security fade. While Chris used his job search as an excuse, I began to see changes in him – like late nights away from home. Our wedding was on hold because of finances, but I was now questioning our relationship as well. Soon after, I came home from work to find Chris packing his bags. I immediately assumed the worse, that he was leaving me. I asked, “What are you doing?” With his reply, I fell to the floor in tears. Chris said he wasn’t happy with me anymore.

It’s been three weeks and I am a mess. I don’t know what to do without Chris. I’m devastated. I am angry, too. I hope my life gets better because I feel I’ve reached rock bottom. Someone else is sleeping next to Chris. I ran into him at the grocery store yesterday, holding hands with his new love, Rob.
Black you. Black me.

Our strength is what can never be taken away from black you, black me. The degradation of your past brought on by slavery, was not to last. Our people’s struggle was not in vain they knew we had a lot to gain. From slave uprising to Civil War, the battle cry, “No slave, no more!”

How can we thank them for their sacrifice? A simple “thank you” will not suffice. They gave their lives for generations proceeding, their courage unparalleled, their legacy unending. Men like Dubois and Booker T. aided our progress, they could not just let it be.

Booker T. began to educate, helping our people graduate. He helped us learn and helped us grow into more than just servants in fields with a hoe. Dubois began the NAACP, he fought for rights for black you and black me.

Liberation had come 50 years before yet Dubois and Booker still had to fight even more. Slavery had ended, progress began, but true freedom was not yet at hand. Even today, the struggle continues, oh yeah, we eat where we like, shop where we like, and things of the like, but racism exists in other venues.

The racists still stare, still look at us and frown. They’re jealous, I know, because they’re not as brown. Although, that’s still no excuse for their actions. We just want our freedom, whole freedom, not a fraction. I know it will come eventually. It will, I promise, for black you and black me.

Andrea Butler
Cultural Expression

The people who make up the Pan-African Studies Department are unique individuals, unique in their approach to teaching and their goals for the department. Though their goals vary, they are linked by a desire to provide their students with a better understanding of African culture. Also, they all work to create a community within the department that challenges students while being open and friendly and fostering self-confidence.

Professor Ayali

Professor Myra Ayali has a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree from Y.O.R.U.B.A. and a M.A. in African American Studies from New York University. She has been teaching at Kent State since 1991. In addition to teaching, she is also involved in various community programs with the black community, including a number of pass and port series for children and young adults.

Professor Ayali wants to show that she doesn’t have a particular discipline or a particular place, but she would like people to see the Department of the African Studies here at Kent State. Recently, she presented a paper at Kent State and Dover State universities on the significance of African American studies. She sees the need for people to understand the importance of African American and African studies in the community. She hopes to develop new curricula that will allow students to acquire and develop professional skills.

Professor Ayali says, “I want to show that the Department of African Studies here at Kent State and Dover State universities has a very important role to play in the community. I hope to develop new curricula that will allow students to acquire and develop professional skills.”

Professor Ayali has a goal to open up new avenues for students to study the culture of the world by giving them a full perspective of the past and present. She says, “I want to show that the Department of African Studies here at Kent State and Dover State universities has a very important role to play in the community. I hope to develop new curricula that will allow students to acquire and develop professional skills.”

Professor Webster

Professor Mary Webster teaches English in the Department of Pan-African Studies. The class has an African Focus on which students read books by African American authors. When she first arrived at Kent State, she was a visiting professor in the Department of Pan-African Studies. After a position opened up in the English department, Professor Webster chose to stay in the English department because she thought it would be easier for her to develop a different perspective from the students. She says, “I believe that the Department of African Studies here at Kent State and Dover State universities has a very important role to play in the community. I hope to develop new curricula that will allow students to acquire and develop professional skills.”

Professor Webster has a goal to open up new avenues for students to study the culture of the world by giving them a full perspective of the past and present. She says, “I believe that the Department of African Studies here at Kent State and Dover State universities has a very important role to play in the community. I hope to develop new curricula that will allow students to acquire and develop professional skills.”

Dr. Badejo

Dr. Badejo was born in the New State since 1980. She came to Kent as an assistant professor and also the chair of the Institute of African American Affairs. She helped develop graduate programs in African American studies and minority studies. She has a B.A. in African American Studies from New York University. She received her Ph.D. in African American Studies from Wayne State University. She has been teaching and doing research at Kent State since 1993.

Dr. Badejo’s goals for the department evolved from the quality of education she received at UCLA. She always worked hard and thought of ways to improve her education and do something to help her students. She always tries to provide students with the ability to do more and do better. She also tries to help students gain a better understanding of the field of African studies. She wants to see that her students succeed and that they go on to Kent State and Dover State universities.

Professor Okeke

Professor Okeke graduated from Kent State in 1983. He taught Black Studies, Spanish and Comparative and Expository Writing. Since then, he has taught in Nigeria, Ghana, Spain and the United States. He has taught at Kent State for two years as a graduate student. He received his M.A. in Comparative Literature and History, focusing on African culture and history. He moved to New York City in 1995.

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Professor Okeke wants to let students know that they are Pan-African scholars. Many students who have classes here in African Studies, have started abroad, which they believe will benefit them. African and Africander students are having an opportunity to be exposed to a variety of African traditions and cultures. They hope to make a difference in African and Africander students in the future.

Professor Okeke’s goal is to open up new avenues for students to study the culture of the world by giving them a full perspective of the past and present. She says, “I believe that the Department of African Studies here at Kent State and Dover State universities has a very important role to play in the community. I hope to develop new curricula that will allow students to acquire and develop professional skills.”

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Chris McVay teaches about Caribbean, Nigerian, Haitian and African authors at Kent State's Department of Pan-African Studies. McVay has a unique perspective on African authors and cultures, having come from a family whose descendents were not enslaved but slave owners.

McVay, one of six children, said her father's ancestors are descendents of Howl Lewis, George Washington's nephew. She said they were slave owners, from a family that still today owns large pieces of land in West Virginia. She said this fact often shocks her students.

McVay spent most her life in Kent and Ravenna, in a household where she was told by her southern-born father, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all." She said it was this attitude, as well as a radicalization that occurred in the least likely of places, a Catholic convent school in Pennsylvania, that lead her on a life-long quest for understanding and diversity. She has a commitment to education and diversity that has gotten her far; she has won the Kent State Distinguished Teaching Award and spoken at a number of lectures about different cultures.

While society tends to shy away from discussions on race, McVay is the opposite. Race and diversity are her life. McVay began her quest for knowledge about different cultures when she was a young child watching news on TV of segregation in the South. But her real change came when she became best friends with a black student, Alice, from Shaker Heights at a convent in Villa Maria, Pennsylvania.

It was at this school in the 1960s where McVay was introduced to Malcolm X and Eldridge Cleaver and discussions on race in America through the pages of radical black literature. Alice had a brother who was a member of Black United Students Organization at Kent State and would send Alice the books in the mail.

"Everyone I knew was afraid of black people," McVay said. "It was a knee jerk fear. There was a common belief that they didn't know their place."

For McVay, reading about the civil rights movement and African American culture just made her even more interested in the world outside the convent walls. McVay ended up a freshman at Kent State, in the midst of the deadly May 4 anti-war protest. She was only six feet away from Allison Krause, one four students shot and killed by the Ohio National Guard.

McVay said, after the shootings, she "ran away from America." She went to Bonn, Germany, to live with her sister. After a year of working odd jobs and sleeping in train stations, McVay ran out of money and returned to Kent State. She started studying German and Russian and eventually got a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship and returned to Germany to study.

However, McVay has always wished she would have studied in the Black Studies department, now known as Kent State's Department of Pan-African Studies. "I always think that if I would have started in Black Studies, even though it wasn't official yet, but taken classes in it, I would have been farther ahead," McVay said.

Although she expresses a small amount of regret, McVay believes in the long run her choice of majors worked out for the best. She said having an extensive background in the best western authors has given her greater knowledge and ability to compare African writers with those commonly taught in college English courses.

"I know what great writing is, and I can say Tony Morrison and James Baldwin are great writers," she said.

McVay not only teaches African American literature to her students, she immerses herself in African history. Even on vacation she visits African American museums and historical civil rights monuments.

"I [dragged] my sister to Frederick Douglass's house," she said. "I am not sure she was interested, but I think she enjoyed it."

Not all of her family share McVay's commitment to learning about and discussing race.
McVay, who became a legal guardian of one her son’s black friends when the boys were in middle school, has had family members separate themselves from her life because of differing opinions about race and diversity. They were not supportive.

“I cry a lot about it. It’s like the twilight zone,” McVay says of losing family members over the issue of race, as she takes off her glasses to dry her eyes.

“Race has become very personal,” McVay said. “For a long time it was simply something I was interested in. Of course there are also principles involved.”

Even though it has become a dividing factor in her family and life, she said she never would change her choices or beliefs which extend beyond race.

Not all of McVay’s family members see her convictions as negative; some have even chosen to follow in her footsteps. Her niece, Carlin Smith, is now studying English and Pan-African Studies at Kent State.

“It is really sad and very disturbing,” Smith said of some family members’ attitudes toward McVay. “It has a huge affect on her. A lot of people are not willing to open their minds.”

Smith doesn’t think she would have chosen to study Pan-African Studies if it were not for her aunt. She jokingly tells McVay, “I am going to take your job.”

And McVay said through her studies and her job, she has learned irreplaceable values from other cultures.

“The values that have survived in the African world of what is right and what is wrong, I identify deeply with,” she explained. “Africans focus on community rather than the individual. I have taken that to heart.” The African values of looking not only toward future progress, but also past traditions, and focusing on family, are also important to her.

McVay reveals, “These are the cultural values that I admire so much, like forgiveness. I think they are brought from Africa. Black people have a lot to be angry about, all the lynching that happened after slavery. As a whole, black people are not vengeful. It amazes me that they don’t want to turn around and do it to us. White people are vengeful; that is what we did after Sept. 11, 2001.

McVay continues, “We can learn from other cultures. They are values that if we took them to heart it would make us better people. We [in America] want everybody to be just like us. We assume they should be like us. I think Americans are genuinely startled when they realize people don’t want to be like us.”

McVay’s strong beliefs lead her through a Master’s degree in English at Kent State, a teaching position in the English department and into Pan-African Studies.

She began in 1999 as a lecturer and said she plans to continue to teach in the department until she either retires or, as she jokingly puts it, “drops dead in front of a class.”

Her students appreciate McVay’s devotion. Senior Melissa Lolenz said McVay is “absolutely wonderful. She always has something to say of substance.”

Although McVay said she never wanted to be a teacher growing up, she now loves her job and gets satisfaction out of teaching about other cultures.

“No body has to be interested or care about race, but refusal to learn anything about other peoples, I have a hard time with.” McVay said. “Especially in the world and country we live in. People can’t live in a cage or a bubble.”
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I Didn’t Vote

Story by I. Ray Miller, III

Perhaps we should make some noise and send shout outs on the local radio stations or make an appearance on BET’s 106 & Park and spread the news about the importance of voting. Perhaps we should get all of the black greeks together and host a step show with the theme “Get Out To Vote” in mind to draw people to their local voting booths. Maybe we should gather celebrities and take them to local communities across the country and encourage people to “Rock the Vote!” These might sound like great ideas, but they have all been tried and still seem to have little effect on Election Day across the country.

In the year 2000, 51.3 percent of the 3.8 million black youth, ages 18-24, were not registered to vote. Furthermore, of the 1.8 million black youth who were registered, 65.5 percent of them did not cast a vote. Many believed their vote would not have an impact on the presidential election or any other local election. Perhaps they did not see the direct connection between their lack of interest in the world of politics and how that would affect them for years to come. If so, why is that? Is it because of lackluster candidates? Does it stem from voter ignorance amongst young minorities? Or both?

Go to any inner city neighborhood and ask the children what they want to be when they grow up and you will get a variety of answers. However, most of them will be consistent with images they see on television. “I want to be a rapper,” or “I want to be a movie star,” or even “I want to play football or basketball.” Some of the other responses will be along the lines of traditional careers such as a doctor, lawyer and/or businessperson. Very few, if any, will say they want to go into politics. Why is that?

Since the end of the Civil Rights Movement of the ’50s and ’60s, the idea amongst most minorities is that we are equal citizens and, as such, we deserve all of the rights and privileges of our fel-
Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be?

– Nelson Mandela

low white men and women. Under the Constitution of the United States, this is a fair statement to make. However, since African Americans and other minorities have earned the right to vote in America, our voter participation has dropped drastically over the past 40 years. Why is that?

Perhaps the flavor of the hip-hop movement of the ’80s, ’90s and into the 21st century has somehow twisted the idea that being successful in America is based on breaking the laws that were made to govern and protect us. Perhaps we’ve been persuaded that happiness through venues such as sports, music and other forms of entertainment is the only way to go. Perhaps it is acceptable to say that lack of education and ignorance of world issues is okay amongst urban communities and perhaps it’s better to just complain of the conditions rather than take aggressive measures to fix the problem. Why is that?

Since the 2000 presidential election between “hometown hero” Al Gore and “questionable radical” George W. Bush, minorities have once again seen the justice system used against them to put in office a man who has little time for minorities in this country. When over 250,000 votes were lost or miscounted, the minds of minority voters in this country began to conjure up ways they could find help in a society that doesn’t care for them. When we couldn’t find help, it was as if someone was snickering in the background saying, “See, I told you so.”

So, why vote? This question is on the minds of millions of Americans during the election season. The answer is: the simple act of voting changes our quality of life. One vote can determine the leadership between an ultra-conservative racist candidate and a concerned liberal candidate. One vote can determine availability of government assistance for those who need it, jobs now and in the future, affordable access to higher education and health care. One vote can make the difference between some level of comfort in life and flat-out misery.

African Americans have so much power and influence in this country that if every minority put forth a candidate and supported them 100 percent, we could dominate every leadership position in the American political arena. Not only could we support a candidate with votes, we could support them financially as well. According to the University of Georgia’s Selig Center of Economic Growth, African Americans are predicted to spend $572 billion dollars in 2003 on consumer products. With this much economic power, minorities can show the true power of their “bling, bling!”

Young people are the future of this country. Young minorities are going to become the dominant force in American society within the next 10 years. It is up to us to focus on the issues concerning the nation today. It is up to us to take back our government and fight for justice and equality for all Americans. It is up to us to eliminate the near trillion-dollar debt President Bush has placed on our heads. It is up to us to protect the lives of our fellow troops who are dying to protect a country that doesn’t care about the quality of their lives. It is up to us to stand up and speak out against disparities in health care and education. It is up to African Americans to take charge of the political arena.

What is holding us back from participating in the election process? Fear of a paper cut? Fear of wearing an “I Voted Today” sticker? Or is it the fear of ignorance that holds us back? Just 40 years ago, African Americans were sitting in predominantly white restaurants in the south, demanding the right for equality. Just 40 years ago, people marched on Washington to voice their opinion and to change the laws of this country. Now 40 years later, we are too apathetic or busy to participate in a process our ancestors bled for! We won the right to vote, but unless we use it—unless we exercise the power we have—without it, we will continue to fall further and further behind.
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Why Do Black Men Date White Women?

If a black man has grown up around a mixture of women all his life, he may feel it is more appropriate to have diverse taste in women. But if a man only sees one particular race, it shapes what he knows and is comfortable with. What you don’t know you don’t like.

Many men have had bad experiences with black women. As a result, they tend to categorize the remaining black women into a little box called “Black Women Aren’t.” Some black men think black woman aren’t good enough, are too difficult to get along with or too sassy and too demanding. Black women have a low tolerance for drama, they say. The stereotype is that white women are more eager to please.

Thomas Jefferson, freshman student at Kent State, believes there is a definite negative stereotype of black women. “The attitude is probably the main thing,” he says. “I haven’t dated outside my race; I don’t think I would unless the person was really amazing.”

Noella Callahan, freshman biochemistry major, says, “There’s a stereotype that we [black women] are obnoxious and loud. White women have a more positive stereotype.”

But are white women really easier to get along with? Do they create less tension and bring less baggage into the relationship? Do they treat their partners better? Are white women more willing to put up with the drama that a black man might create?

Why is Interracial Dating So Prevalent among Successful Black Men?

Why does it seem as if the moment a black man reaches the height of his success, an interracial relationship is not far behind? There are many explanations for this. One reason may be, again, his environment. He is no longer only surrounded by black women once he progresses further in society.

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frames have been glamorized as the total epitome of beauty. Their long blonde hair, fair skin, light eyes and typically thin frames have been glamorized as the total package, making white women suitable depending on the type of school. For black males who attended a majority college, the number of interracial couples tends to grow.

Take Tiger Woods, for example. After attending Stanford University, he became a professional in the world of golf. He has been highly criticized for dating fair-skinned, blonde, European women. Black women roll their eyes and mutter,"What's wrong with getting you a sister? What—are sisters not good enough?" But if you take a closer look at his environment, you might begin to see why. He went to a predominately white school and plays a sport played predominately by whites.

How many black women would Tiger meet on a typical day? Probably not many. He likes what he sees. If the women he sees and interacts with on a daily basis are white, it is likely to follow that is who he is going to have a relationship with.

Another reason successful black men may be drawn to white women is because of the standard of beauty issue. White women have long been considered the epitome of beauty. Their long blonde hair, fair skin, light eyes and typically thin frames have been glamorized as the total package, making white women suitable "trophy wives." Society has pushed this image into our heads since slavery. However, not all black men believe this to be true. Some successful black men, including Will Smith, Denzel Washington and Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds, have found beautiful black women to marry.

Do Successful Black Women Seek Partners of Different Races?

It seems black women are more hesitant to date outside their race. "Black women first and foremost want to be affirmed by our own men," says Audrey Edwards, writer and real-estate broker (Essence Magazine, July 2003).

That said, people usually draw a blank when trying to think of successful black women dating and marrying men outside their race. The first name that comes to mind is Iman, the successful supermodel from the 1980s and cosmetics queen of the 1990s. She and her husband, white rock star David Bowie, have been married for 11 years. She gives reasons why their marriage works in the April issue of MORE Magazine, "My husband is the coolest man I have ever met in my life. Even how he walks in the apartment! And he has a great sense of humor."

Another successful black woman who dates outside her race is Whoopi Goldberg. She has dated such actors as Ted Danson and Frank Langella. In an article in Newsweek Magazine, she was quoted as saying, "First off, I have dated black men. But a woman with power is a problem for any man, but particularly a black man because it's hard for them to get power. I understand that, but I have to have a life, and that means dating the men that want to date me."

When successful black women date outside their race, is it because there is no one else to relate to them, as Whoopi Goldberg hinted at? If that's true, we need to ask ourselves: Are black women advancing faster than their counterparts?

"Almost definitely," Aquila Dryer, sophomore accounting major. "Black men haven't realized what they can do, while black women have."
Black women in college are taking care of business. Taking a look at historically black colleges and universities lets you see how big the gap is between black men and black women. At Fisk University, the percentage of black male students is 32. On the Hampton campus, the number is a little higher, with black males making up about 39 percent of the population. However, at Clark Atlanta University, the number of black males is incredibly low, hovering at 30 percent. Black women are making strides in the classroom, and black men are trying to keep up.

A study by the U.S. Justice Policy Institute found that in 2000, there were 791,600 black men in jail or prison and 603,032 were enrolled in colleges or universities. This may be a misrepresentation since it includes men in prison who are not of college age. But it still shows the high number of black men who are in prison or jail. So what does that mean? Black women have a limited pool of educated eligible black men to choose from. Should black women keep looking for black men to marry or broaden their horizons?

In a poll conducted by Essence Magazine, of the almost 10,000 women surveyed, 32 percent of the women said black women should broaden their horizons, while 23 percent said black men are the only men who will receive their love. It seems like black women are split over this issue. Many don’t know whether to search elsewhere for true love or keep digging where it isn’t certain they’ll strike gold.

Successful Sisters at Kent State Speak Up

Miranda Williams, senior public relations major, hails from Chicago, IL, and later Gahanna, OH. She plans to use her degree to build her career at a public relations agency, preferably in Chicago, where she still has many relatives. Miranda is the president of Kent Interhall Council. She’s also involved with Student Ambassadors, National Residence Hall Honorary and Phi Sigma Pi, an honor fraternity.

Miranda says, growing up in Chicago, she didn’t see much interracial dating. People stayed in their own groups. In Gahanna, “it was a big thing because the black population was so small.”

Once Miranda arrived at Kent, however, things didn’t change much. “I see interracial dating happening more so with black males,” she says. “It’s only about eight percent African American here and it makes for a small community of people. Either your options need to expand to Akron or the Cleveland area or you need to look outside of your race.”

“There’s a perception that black women are hard to deal with and they’re too sassy,” Miranda continues. “I might call it a warped view of black women.”

When asked if she would ever consider dating outside of her race, Miranda comments, “I would consider it. He would have to have a little more, though, for me to be able to deal with the added pressures of an interracial relationship.”

Another successful sister is Chandra Phillips, graduate student at Kent State. She has very definite views on interracial dating. During her time spent as an undergraduate here, she’s active in numerous student organizations. Chandra will graduate in December 2003 with a Master’s degree in Media Management. She received her undergraduate degree in Electronic Media Production. Once she graduates, she wants to get a job as soon as possible in film. She wants to produce and direct films and maybe venture into acting.

“Interracial dating, whether it takes place here on the Kent campus or elsewhere in the world, should be a personal decision.”
Chandra says she noticed a lot of inter-racial dating in her hometown of Medina, OH. “It was a predominately white town. The inter-racial dating was big with the black men, but they didn’t like it when the black women would try to do it. I didn’t notice the inter-racial dating as much at Kent because I was used to it.”

“What’s good for the goose is good for the gander!” she jokes when asked about black women dating outside their race. “It’s good to have your options open. You’ve got to find someone who you’re equally yoked with. With me I don’t expect him to be perfect but he’s got to have goals and ambition. He’s got to strive to be something better. You’ve got to have the ability to carry a good conversation. You need to bring something to the table because in my opinion I’m bringing a lot to the table. You need to be able to grow with one another.”

Chandra continues, “There are already more successful black women than black men. There are many reasons: the society, the men, the environment they’ve grown up in, the educational system. Some teachers can’t identify with them. In elementary school, they’re considered cute, but when they get to junior high, they’re considered a threat. Many black men don’t have a father. There’s no one in the home for them to identify with. Only a man can teach a boy how to be a man.”

**Successful Brothers at Kent State Speak Up**

With some black women on campus speaking their mind on inter-racial dating, it’s only fair to let some black men have their say as well.

Bruce Mitchell, junior education major, speaks on inter-racial dating: “I would say that inter-racial dating can be a very difficult issue. I have not quite decided on how I feel so much. But, I will say that if it is God’s will for one to marry a white person or black person then that is what God wants to happen.”

Bruce is president of Kent State’s Voices of Testimony and an resident adviser for Centennial Court dorms. He plans to use his education degree to eventually become a principal or superintendent.

“I don’t know if you want to call it inter-racial dating, perhaps it is just a one time relationship or a ‘no strings attached’ agreement,” Bruce says about the dating scene on campus. “Whatever the case may be, I do see inter-racial couples, and for the most part this could be because this is predominantly a white campus.”

“I have also heard that white females date black men because of the stereotype that they have bigger penises than white men. It’s said that black men date white women because they are more easily convinced to have sex and perform oral sex in a much shorter time frame than black women,” Bruce continues. “However I do look at white females and feel that some of them are cute. I believe that I will ultimately be with a black female.”

John Paul says there is a negative stereotype of black women. “It’s depicted all the time on TV,” he says. “Also, it’s in real life too. You’ve got some black women that act like that.”

John Paul, broadcast news major, is the Health anchor on Kent State’s TV2. He hopes to become a news anchor in either Cleveland, OH or Miami, FL.

John is also a resident adviser for Kooce Hall. “It’s the only thing I have time for,” he says with a smile. John has casually dated outside his race. The inter-racial scene at Kent, he says, is nothing to get upset over. “It’s not that big of a thing.”

Overall, inter-racial dating doesn’t bother him. “It doesn’t matter what color the person is, as long as they have a good heart and a sense of humor,” John says.

**What Does All this Debate Lead to?**

Interracial dating, whether it takes place here on the Kent campus or elsewhere in the world, should be a personal decision. Everyone should be free to date whomever they want, whenever they want, regardless of the person’s skin color.

Whenever people’s mind-set changes to the point where they are able to look at a couple and judge their love, not their color, we will have accomplished something. We may not be living in a society where that is entirely true now, but maybe one day love will truly be color-blind.

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Chandra Phillips
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Soul Food
A Culinary Expression of Culture

Story: Mitzi Payne
Photography: Pat Jarrett

Greens, yams, chitterlings, grits, ham-hocks, fried chicken, black-eyed peas and cornbread are foods that take us to memories of family reunions with nothing to worry about but who cooked what and how much to eat. For years, different cultures have been expressing their traditions through culinary art. African American culture in particular has coined a phrase that is now used worldwide. “Soul Food” is comfort food whose recipes have been passed down from generation to generation for centuries. In understanding the ideas, feelings and emotions surrounding soul food, there is need for a short history lesson.

In the early 1400s, the Europeans invaded Africa. They brought with them a variety of new foods such as turnips, from which turnip greens are made, and cabbage, which was Spain’s contribution. Africa was already plentiful with the necessary ingredients for basic meal plans. Grain, yams, pumpkin, eggplant, onion and cucumber originated on the continent. With the European influence on the African diet, meals were forced to move

"African American culture in particular has..."
coined a phrase that is now used worldwide.

away from the mostly vegetarian regularity to create combinations with a new interest of seasoning food for taste. To efficiently utilize their resources, basic cooking techniques were modified and expanded.

When slave trading began, Africans were forced to change their eating habits. They were given only the bare minimum to sustain the treacherous journey. Those who survived would learn that many of the foods native to their home accompanied them to the Americas for trade. The fact that these foods were all they could cling to, to remind them of home, is what makes soul food so significant. The tradition, history and experience of cooking brought slaves of different tribes and pieces of auction-torn families together with the one thing they could all relate to. Preparing and eating meals with family and friends, after hours of hard work, became a time to remember and hope for better days. It was over these meals that history and folk stories were repeated in hopes of preserving the African culture. It calmed the crying souls of all who were fortunate enough to partake in the experience, hence the phrase, "soul food."

Today, we have a whole new generation of soul food. Granted, there are cities better suited to compete in the soul food market, but Cleveland has its fare share of restaurants with soul. I had the chance to dine at a few of them and I bring to you my findings. Rated by the Cleveland Restaurant Guide as one of the best local soul food restaurants, Phil the Fire provides a down home cooking atmosphere. Located at 2775 S. Moreland Blvd, Phil the Fire offers a plethora of dishes that have won the restaurant titles such as the Silver Spoon 2003: Best Soul Food Restaurant-Cleveland Magazine; 2003 Readers Survey: Best Soul Food Restaurant-Northern; and 2003 All American Catfish Tour: Top Catfish Restaurant-National Catfish Institution. Phil offers everything from fried okra to their signature dish, chicken and waffles. That's right, chicken and waffles. I assure you, these dishes are as equally appetizing together as they are apart. The chicken and waffles entrée is served as one, four-section Belgian waffle topped with your choice of chicken piece. I chose drumsticks, and when the chicken is pulled
from the bone and covered with syrup, the dish is surprisingly excellent. Combined with the popular Phil the Fire side dishes of sweet cornbread and greens with chopped onions, this traditionally southern plate is a delicacy.

The new kid on the block in the land of soul food establishments is Alexandria’s Soul Food at 12814 Buckeye Road. Here you will find such rarities as Jamaican Jerk Chicken Wings, Catfish Chowder, Honey Dipped Fried Chicken, St. Louis BBQ Ribs and Salmon Etouffee. With its red walls, Alexandria’s invites you to come in, kick your shoes off and throw down. This place is spicy from head to toe and so are their New Orleans Crab Cakes, which were my selection during the visit. Receiving such remarks as “Best Soul Food Restaurant in Cleveland,” from John Long of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, was well warranted. Unlike ordinary crab cake, Alexandria’s mix includes a blend of titillating spices that give the cakes that extra kick you miss in most others. They also offer a full bar and Sunday brunch. Alexandria’s is professional in decoration but the accommodating staff and the welcoming conversation are a cut above the rest.

For those of you uncomfortable with eating meat, you have not been left out of the soul food experience. Soul Vegetarian in Cleveland is a vegan soul food sensation. Located at Colonial Marketplace on 530 Euclid Ave in the Theater District, Soul Vegetarian’s selection includes battered cauliflower, kale greens with cornbread, mushroom gyro, BBQ Roast and tofu filets. In addition to the fully vegan menu, this soul food restaurant is free of additives and preservatives and leaves out white sugar and white flour. I recommend you try the carrot supreme or BBQ tofu sandwiches.

It is evident, even from these few top choices in the Cleveland area, that soul food is meant to warm and revitalize the hearts of all that indulge in it. Rooted in the traditions and culture of Africa, it is a culinary art that all can learn and enjoy. The ritual of cooking with friends and family is preserved in the public and private experiences of consuming it. The conversations held over breakfasts, lunches and dinners are most often kept as fond memories and ways of remembering the happenings of the past. With these award-winning restaurants, we can relive the sensations of food cooked to perfection with time and tradition. Each selected item is rich with historical relevance and flavor and very much lives up to the definition of soul food.
THE CREW
long-lasting friendships
It is hard to keep a friendship going in college, but when it’s a group of seven active black females there are even more factors to consider. This group, collectively referred to as “the crew,” has maintained their friendship since freshmen year. Over the course of the past four years, their friendship has evolved into a stronger bond.

Reflecting on when they first met, senior marketing major, Rachelle Brown, anticipated making friends but not being so close to so many. “I guess it’s rare for it [group of friends] to be so big, but I was used to having a group of closer friends in high school, so it wasn’t a shocker,” Brown said.

Building a strong foundation early is what the crew attributes to the staying power of their friendship. “When you have a strong foundation, there isn’t a great distance between you; just being honest and keeping it real helps,” said Alisha Mitchell, senior biology major.

Crystal Langford, senior human development and family studies major, agrees. She sees their friendship as a result of similar principles. “We can all relate to each other because we all have similar morals and values,” Langford said.

For Langford, it’s trust and commonalities that build a friendship. She considers a friend “someone you can relate to, talk to about anything, has your best interests in mind, looks out for you and has your back when people try to start stuff with you.”

Philosophy major, Kristin Taylor, believes the level of support they receive from one another has aided in maintaining their friendship. According to Taylor, personal commonalities spark conversations but it’s the time spent together that preserves a friendship. “If none of us had supported the things we each do, whether it’s emotional, spiritual or just with our activities, then we wouldn’t have a common ground,” Taylor said.

What Makes a Good Friend?

Dannika Wallace, business management major, defines a friend as “someone you can trust, talk to, have fun with and depend on; someone who you love even when you get sick of them.”

Trust and loyalty are the two most important aspects of being a friend. Taylor’s idea of a good friend is just someone who is agreeable and whose friendship is more than just convenience: “Someone you like to be around and are agreeable with each other most of the time. You have their back and they have yours. It’s more than just convenience. You don’t have to be ‘round each other all the time to remain friends.”

Having a close circle of support like this one is like having a second family. Marketing major, Andréa Spencer, likes having the sense of family while at school. “It’s nice to be a part of a big group of people when you’re away from your family. You can trust and confide in them and that’s really important when you’re away from home,” Spencer said.

Mitchell concurs; their friendship provides a level of comfort and stability that is needed. She does, however, see how their group can be intimidating. “It’s a sense of family and sisterhood. I can see how it could be intimidating to see this group of strong black females together,” Mitchell admitted.

Downfalls to Cliques

By far, the group believes the biggest pitfall of being called a clique is the negative perceptions from others. Brown believes that the term “clique” takes away from her individuality.

“We’re close, we share inside jokes and have the same values, but it doesn’t mean people should discount our individuality,” Brown said.

The crew collectively holds seven executive board positions on Kent Interhall Council (KIC), All Campus Programming Board (ACPB) and Boosting Alcohol Consciousness Concerning the Health of University
Students (B.A.C.H.U.S.) Brown believes as a group they attract a lot of negative attention.

“If one person acts a certain way, people assume we’re all like that,” Brown said.

Langford says others act as if they are always together. “People act like we’re connected at the hip or something, like we’re always together,” she said, “but we have our own lives. We’re just such good friends, we make time for each other.”

Wallace sums up the negative perception for any group of friends as “hateration.”

“If they don’t like one, they tend not to like all of us,” Wallace said. She explains the group dynamic to be a result of genuine like and mutual respect. “We just have fun together and kick it and that’s why we can continue to be friends,” Wallace said.

Spencer explains that she does not consider herself an isolationist. She simply enjoys the company of her friends. “I think when people see us around campus, they see it like we only want to associate with each other, but we really just enjoy each other’s company. If some of your best memories in college had been with a certain group of people, of course you’re going to spend a lot of time with them because you can just be yourself,” Spencer said.

Finding Time

As seniors, “the crew” is spending a lot of time preparing for life after graduation. Time balancing classes, activities, a social life and friendship is hard to come by.

For Brown, what helps her find time for friends is their mutual involvement in student activities. As vice president of programming for KIC, she works a great deal in the office with Taylor and co-sponsoring programs on the ACPB with friends Wallace, Spencer and Mitchell.

Brown said, “One of the things that helps is that we’re all involved. The best thing is that we have an understanding. You don’t have to talk every day to be good friends.”

Spencer said finding time for each other is easier than finding time for school: “It’s harder to find time for school. You don’t have to be motivated to have a good time, but you have to focus to complete school work.”

Conflicts

The girls admit that one of the hardest parts of graduation will be splitting up. However, they do not foresee any problems amongst them.

Mitchell says conflict is inevitable. “There’s always going to be some sort of conflict. But having a strong friendship will get you through most things.”

One of the funnier developments over the years is their creation of the term “clopper.” Simply defined as any guy that attempts to hop from person to person in their group.

Taylor finds some of the situations concerning “clopplers” to be amusing in retrospect. “I don’t understand it. If you were talking to me and you know that’s my girl, what makes you think you have the right to talk to her? That’s my girl; she’s like my sister. You should know it’s just wrong,” Taylor shares.

Brown explains, their rules for dating are quite simple: you do not date or talk to someone who was previously involved with members of the crew.

This is a good rule to maintain friendship and civility among the women, but it is hard on their social life.

“When your crew is so big, it’s [their rule] pretty limiting after four years,” Brown said.
The Department of Pan-African Studies

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.

10101 Elementary Kiswahili I (3)
10102 Elementary Kiswahili II (3)
13001 Foundations of Pan-African Studies I (03-03)
13002 Foundations of Pan-African Studies II (03-03)
20101 Kiswahili III (3)
20102 Kiswahili IV (3)
22000 African World Creative Writing (03-06)
22101 African-American Visual Artists (3)
22200 Introduction to African Arts (3)
22201 Expressivity in African Arts (3)
23001 Black Experience I (3)
23002 Black Experience II (3)
23171 The African American Community (3)
24093 Black Writers Workshop (3)
24407 Caribbean Studies (3)
30010 African and African American Philosophies (3)
30120 Contemporary Issues in African-American Education (3)
31092 Practicum in African Theatre Arts (3-9)
32010 The Pan-African Essay (3)
33100 African-American Family in Historical Perspective (3)
33110 The Black Woman: Historical Perspectives (3)
33120 The African-American Man in Contemporary Society (3)
33209 Ancient-African Cultures (3)
33203 Kiswahili Conversation (3)
33508 Caribbean Social and Political Directions (3)
34000 Introduction to African World View (3)
35100 African-American Social, Political, and Economic Systems (3)
35200 African Social, Political, and Economic Systems (3)
36210 African Traditional Architectural Settings (3)
37000 Oral and Written Discourses in Pan-African Studies (3)
37010 Research Methods in Pan-African Studies (3)
37020 Pan-Africanism and the Model African Unity Organization (OAU-AU) (3)
37143 The African Brazilian Experience in Culture and Literature (3)
40080 Pedagogy for Pan-African Studies
41192 African-American Affairs Practicum (1-12)
42095 Special Topics in the Literature of Pan-Africa (3)
42500 Black Education in America (3)
43095 Special Topics in Pan-African Literature, Arts, and Culture (3)
43995 Special Topics in African Diaspora Studies (4)
45095 Special Topics in Pedagogy in Pan-African Studies (3-12)
47010 Theoretical Approaches to Pan-African Studies (3)
47091 Senior Seminar in Pan-African Studies (3)
47095 Special Topics in Theoretical and Applied Research (3)
47150 The Underground Railroad (3)
49093 Variable Workshops in Pan-African Studies (2-6)
SU Grading Prerequisite: Permission.
49095 Selected Topics (2-3)
49096 Individual Investigation (1-3)