starting over
the end of

the beginning
the following people are starting over

Tara Pringle general manager.editor
Marisia Styles managing editor
Brandon Isabell copy editor
Noella Callahan business manager
Adria Barbour staff writer
Jacala Barnett staff writer
Crystal Huggins staff writer
Teddy Harris staff writer
Erika Meyers staff writer
Autumn Ritchie staff writer
Gathinja Yamokoski staff writer
Jonah Yamokoski staff writer
Tara Pringle staff writer
Jerry Jezek art director
Elizabeth Ferraro photographer
Ryan Blackwell photographer
Kristin Travis graphic designer
Margo Phillips ad designer
E. Timothy Moore uhuru advisor
Mike Magnes ad sales
letter from the general manager

To all uhuru readers:

For too long, if you saw a black person in the newspaper, or on the 10 o’clock news, you knew what you were about to read/hear was not going to be good. The media has always been accused of having a reluctance about showing black people doing positive things and instead jumps at the chance to show yet another black rapist, murderer, thug or criminal. Rarely do you read in newspapers about the young black man who graduated summa cum laude from Harvard University, or the young black woman who’s making strides in the business world.

But we’re here to change that.

uhuru means “freedom”- freedom to choose, freedom to be, freedom to grow. Black students, and other minorities on this campus, are a group of strong-willed, creative, intelligent and determined people - people I’ve come to grow with and respect more and more each day.

Black people are beautiful and we do positive things every day. So let’s celebrate that. Let the world know how smart you are, how motivated you are, how successful you can be. Make today your “new beginning”. How you do that is up to you.

Much love,

Tara M.L. Pringle
editor, general manager
why i chose kent

by: Crystal Huggins

Many people have the choice to go to any college that they choose. They choose Public, Private, Ivy League, or even Community College. You then have the ones who choose to come to Kent State. Why?

Kent State is the third largest university in Ohio? Kent has a total of eight campuses with more than 33,000 students that attend. The Student-Faculty ratio at the Kent Campus is 16.6 to 1. Kent awards more than $100 million dollars in financial aid each academic year in Loans, Scholarships, Grants, and Work Study. Kent offers 181 programs at a bachelor’s degree level and 138 programs at a master’s degree level. Kent also is known for the Black squirrels on campus. Many people may decide to come due to the reputation that Kent is known for. Not just the rep about the good academic programs but the fact that Kent is known for the good party scene here on campus.

Personally, I chose to come to KSU for a few reasons. One was the good reputation with the School of Journalism and Communication. I heard that so many good things come out of the college, and the opportunities and different organizations involved are a good thing to be a part of.

I then took into consideration that Kent was a good choice because of the campus and the good atmosphere. Even though KSU is a large campus, the campus itself does not seem too big, so you can have that “homey” feeling while living on campus. Compared to all the other colleges that I have visited, Kent has one of the better facilities around.

I then got the feeling that KSU actually was interested in me attending. The assistance that I received while applying gave me the impression that I was considered a person at this university and not another number just attending here. Even though I wasn’t really sure that Kent was the college that I wanted to go to, the consideration that was shown along with my other reasons made me decide to come to KSU to further my education.

I got the chance to talk with my fellow schoolmates to see why they actually came to Kent and here is what they had to say.

Sheryl Richardson
Exploratory Major
"Because I like the campus and I received the Oscar Ritchie Memorial Scholarship. I also heard good things about the school because my uncle, and cousin attended school here, and my aunt works on campus."

Terrell Richardson Jr. Acting Major
"I chose Kent because I heard the theater department was good and so far it seems to be. I heard the guy-girl ratio is one to five."

John Gavin
Computer Technology Major
"Because I need to make money later on in life"
Mado lyn Smith
Nursing Major
"Because Kent gave me more money than my other choices and it was close enough to home. So when I want to go home I could, but it was far enough for me to be on my own.

Titus Deshields
Exploratory Major
"To get away from Home"

Jeremy McFadden
Theater Major
"To experience new things such as living on campus, and meeting new people"

Brian Savage
Computer Information Systems Major
"To further my education and to grow spiritually and emotionally as a person"

Idris-Farid Clark
Architecture Major
"Kent has one of the better Architecture programs in America"

Harrison Holloman
Pre-Engineering Major
"Kent was my stepping stone to get into my full major of engineering. I heard that Kent was a diverse school, I had relatives that attended Kent, and I heard the parties be bangin'. So I decided to come see it that was true and so far Kent is living up to all my expectations".

Asa Johnson
Magazine Journalism Major
"Initially I came to Kent with aspirations of becoming a great Fashion Designer, being that I heard that KSU was one of the top schools in fashion Design. So there was no doubt that Kent was my number one choice. After attending Kent State for two semesters and taking classes in both fields of interest I decided that the College of Communication was for me".

Abigail Foerster
German Major
"They have a good German Program. Everyone told me that Kent was full of Academic possibilities, so I decided to come see if that was true. So far, it's lived up to its name. It's far enough from home, but not too far."

Everyone has his or her one reason for coming to Kent State University. You have the ones who come just to get away from home, and the ones who are interested in the academics. All in all, you come to Kent for a reason, but what really matters is you stay at Kent and get your degree.

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getting re-started

retro first-year experience... how little things change

Editor’s Note: This article first appeared in the April 1985 issue of The Spectrum Magazine, now known as uhuru. It is included in this issue for two reasons. One: to showcase the relevancy of Spectrum on this campus, both now and then. Two: to help black students realize the opportunity in front of them. Everyone in this country does not get the chance to go to college, so the ones that do attend college need to take full advantage of the opportunity. Learn something new, and graduate into the “real world.”

HINTS TO A SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

by: Kimberly Hunt

Making a smooth transition from being a successful high school student to becoming a successful college student can be a rewarding task. You will be required to do a great deal more work (reading, theme, research, etc) and become a much more responsible individual. This means you will have to take on new study habits and learn the importance of time management.

Listed below are a few hints on how to make this transition easier:

• Set goals. It is vital to realize the importance of setting challenging goals. Make a written list of short and long-term goals and live by your list. Remember to revise your list frequently to keep it challenging.

• Study hard and study smart. Recognize and improve your need and motivation for studying and employ efficient study habits. Organize for studying—organize your study time, study materials and study area. Improve your techniques for studying, your efficiency in reading and analyzing textbooks, listening and taking notes, writing and rewriting reports, reviewing and preparing for and taking tests. Working at or near your potential depends upon the degree to which you put forth more steady, vigorous, motivated and effective effort than on your past accomplishments.

• Have faith. Have faith in yourself and your capabilities. Hold tight to your beliefs of what your college education will bring you. Some courses now may not seem applicable to your future; be patient. What you know in your heart, what you have faith in, will hold true in the end.

• Strive to improve. Whatever you do strive to give it your all. Realize that the job of learning is not always easy. Learning things you have not known before, questioning things taken for granted that you never wondered about, and experiencing actively rather than passively is not always easy. You may feel lonely many times, but there are a lot of good people on campus to help you identify, sort through, and solve your problems. Most importantly—remember, don’t be satisfied with “good enough,” when you know you can do better. Always do your very best.

• Develop a positive attitude. If you feel good about yourself and are willing to help yourself you will go far. The Faculty and staff are going to be much more helpful to those students who are willing to help themselves.

• Take classes and/or study with friends. It is helpful to study with someone whom you feel comfortable sharing ideas and problems with.

• Be teachable. Keep an open mind. Just because you have taken the same class in high school doesn’t mean that an instructor can’t add something new or updated. Some courses may seem unnecessary to you; learn the material—the class is in your curriculum for a reason. Unfortunately, that reason just may not be clear to you at this time. If you want to know why it is applicable—ask your undergraduate advisor.

• Learn from your mistakes. Go over incorrect test, quizzes and homework problems; there is a lot to be learned from your mistakes. Find out where you went wrong and see to it that you do not repeat your mistakes.

• Be honest with yourself and others. Be decisive—do not procrastinate. Be responsible to your commitments and grades—do not rationalize or ignore your failures. Be proud of your accomplishments—do not exaggerate or distort your successes. Be yourself—work hard to be the best you can be.

• Be a part of Kent State. Starting college is a time to become independent of your family and hometown. Get involved. There are plenty of activities always going on to meet the needs of all students. The intramurals department offers an extensive variety of activities. Join the Student Senate, Christians on Campus, Baptist Student Union, the Chess club, the Bicycle club, a Greek organization, or Black United Students. Be a part of something on campus, there are plenty of things to do, including part-time jobs and athletic and social groups. Have fun; enjoy your stay at Kent State.

• Join a minority organization within the college of your major. Again, get involved. Be an active member. You will gain valuable information and priceless contacts in your profession. Groups like the Minority Business Association frequently bring in key personnel from major firms in this area to talk about areas of interest.

• Be resourceful. If you have questions—ask. There are many offices on campus which are very helpful. Student Life, Department of Developmental Services, your college undergraduate advising offices, the Office of Affirmative Action—the list goes on and on. Also, don’t be afraid to talk to your instructor or ask for a tutor. Above all, remember: “There is no such thing as a stupid question.” So if you have a question—ask, don’t guess.

• Commit yourself to take action now. Don’t put things off. Don’t let yourself get caught writing an entire research paper the night before it is due or realize your test is in three days and you still have 10 chapters to read. Plan ahead. Make a written schedule and stick to it.

• Learn time management. Map out your days and week. Be sure to include plenty of study time and a time to relax and have fun. You should be involved with activities outside of class, but not so much so that your studies will suffer. If you plan your time wisely you will be able to get a lot more things done, and done on schedule.

• You only get out of a college education what you put into it. So give it your all, get your time and money’s worth, and you’ll appreciate it in the end.

I’m very sure that there are quite a few more hints, and I am also sure that you can think of a few more on your own. You should develop your own list of what works best for you and then stick by it. But that’s what college is all about anyway—learning and developing your own ideas.
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Chandra Phillips
Electronic Media Production, undergraduate degree Spring 2002
Media Management, current graduate student

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double lives

how low down does the downlow go?

by: Autumn Ritchie

The most common subject that comes up in most women's conversations is the opposite sex. We are constantly trying to figure out why they do the things that they do. A lot of women strain their brains trying to understand their actions, body language, and the words that come out of their mouths. I am quite sure that we are not the only ones engaging in these conversations because I am almost convinced that men talk as much as we do.

One night last semester, a friend of mine and I were up late having one of these conversations while trying to finish up some school work. As usual, we were discussing men and why they do what they do. Not too far into the conversation some of the other girls in the computer lab started to give their input and before you knew it we had a whole forum going. It was all good until my girl brought up something about being careful about men on the “down low.”

I had heard her talk about this before but I would always block it out. I had read something about the down low before but I didn’t pay it too much attention. She continued going on about how she had seen this man on Oprah and how there was this big epidemic going on. Most of the girls were like, “Well, my man ain’t like that.” I was still trying to dismiss it from my mind because thinking about “down low” men will make you never want to date again. Plus I thought that she was just being paranoid.

I started to listen to her after she showed me an episode of Oprah where a man named J.L. King told his torrid tale of how he cheated on his wife with different men. There were also other men on the show talking about how “being on the low” had affected their lives. I could not believe what I was seeing. Before the show went off King talked about his book that was coming out. After seeing that episode I swore that I was going to be the first one with the book.

“Now do you see what I am talking about?” my girl said. What could I say? The truth spoke for itself.

Before this whole new trend of men sleeping with men became a popular topic, the “down low” was a phrase that was taken from R. Kelly who was singing about creeping with someone who was not your man or woman. Nowadays this phrase has taken on a whole new meaning. J.L. King’s book “On the Down Low” talks about men who engage in sex with other men. The catch is that these men do not consider themselves gay or bisexual. He begins the book with talking about his own life and how he got into the lifestyle. He speaks about his first time being with a man who was attending the same church as he was.

Before all of this he says that he was curious about men and this is what led him to do what he did. He talks about how having an affair with another man made him lie to his wife and even push her away. He reminisces about the day that his wife caught him at the house of his lover and how she put him out. King’s friends and family did not know about his secret life. They saw him as a successful man who had a good marriage and beautiful kids. After his secret was discovered, all that people could see was shame.

Many men fear being shamed in the black community so they keep their sexual orientation a secret. We as African Americans do not see being gay as something that is acceptable and because of this, many men “on the low” feel that they have to live a double life.

A lot of the “down low” men are married and no one would suspect that they are engaging in this kind of behavior. The scary thing about it is a lot of women are coming down with AIDS because no one would suspect this type of behavior out of these men. King says that a lot of men on the DL do not want to use protection because it reminds them that what they are doing is not only wrong but also dangerous. They do not want to get tested because they a lot of them really do not want to know the results. This is a contributing factor in the rise of AIDS in African American women.

Shannon Woods, community health educa-
tion major, says, “I think that it is wrong to deceive yourself and others. It makes me more aware of who I come in contact with. The AIDS epidemic is the scariest part because women who are supposed to be in ‘monogamous’ relationships are contracting HIV from men engaging in sex with men.”

Many women don’t understand why some men would want to sleep with other men. Essence Magazine ran an article on the DL subject. They interviewed 4 men who were “on the low.” Some of their reasons were things like emotional needs. They do not feel that women can meet their emotional needs. They feel that they are the ones who are the caretakers and the entire burden falls on them. Therefore they seek out a relationship with another man who can give them some sort of emotional support. Some “down low” men blame the women. Some men claim that women are too difficult to deal with; we tend to let ourselves go at times and gain weight. They do not want to have to go through a whole lot of stress just to have sex. Having sex with a man does not require all of the drama. They just do what they do and go.

King’s book talks about the great lengths that these men go through just to have sex. The Internet seems to be a big place for these men to hook up. A lot of men have web pages and personal ads so they can hook up with other men. Chat rooms have always been a place for people of any sexual orientation to hook up at and DL men take full advantage of that also. King describes a situation in his book where a woman actually woke up and was looking at her boyfriend’s computer (he had forgotten to turn it off) and caught him trying to find a way to hook up with another man. King also talks about how men will travel to different cities and states to meet.

He says that in his case that it was easy because he had a job that required him to travel. The church is also another place for these men to hook up, according to King. He met his first encounter in the church and said that a lot of men get involved in men’s groups or mentor young teenage boys just to hook up. One of the things that I found disturbing about the book is that these men will pursue married men. This means that you could marry a good man but if he gets curious he could cross over into that behavior.

Another thing that I found to be disturbing was that a lot of DL men are also on college campuses. For some “down low” men, this is where it all begins. An article on the MSNBC website talks about the rise of HIV infections that are being discovered in black male college students. The cause is said (although it cannot be proven) to be driven by young men having risky sexual encounters with other men. In North Carolina 94 male students were infected over a three year time period. Seventy-three of them were black males, one student admitted to injecting drugs, two other students said that they only had sex with women, the rest of them were apparently having sex with other men. These findings are startling considering that there is a lot of sexual involvement that goes on at college campuses. Colleges are not the only place where the HIV/AIDS statistics are high. High school students are also a high risk. For some males their DL discovery starts here. King talks about how important it is to educate and protect our youth from what is going on out there.

Even though I feel that men who engage in DL behavior are wrong, I cannot put all of the blame on them. We as women need to start being more selective about who we give our time to. Take time to really get to know someone before you start engaging in things that will put your health at risk. This means not giving it up on the first or second encounter with a man. If you choose to go ahead and do it at least use protection.

Too many women do not speak up about protection and it is costing them their lives. I would suggest being abstinence until you have found a lifelong partner (preferably your husband) that you know is legit. This might mean being single for longer than you might desire, but at least you will know that you are in the safety zone and can have a peace of mind. We as women need to love ourselves and realize that our lives are not meant to revolve around a man.
I am not saying that all of our men are bad; I am not trying to bash our men either. Lord knows that they have enough to endure in life without everyone looking at them as being gay on the low. However, the statistics and constant articles about this behavior cannot be swept under the rug. No one is making these things up.

I think that any man on the DL trying to pass for straight should keep it real with himself. Why would you want to hurt innocent people? He would also need to realize that his health is also at risk. Married DL men need to think about not only what they are doing to their wives, but also to their children. I wish that I could say that I think that there is a solution to this problem but I don’t think that it will stop.

The only thing that I can say is women keep your eyes open. “Down Low” brothers: keep it real! I know that society makes it hard, but why put lives at risk? If you are that ashamed of your behavior then maybe seek professional or spiritual help. I don’t believe at this point that the shame lies so much in the behavior. I mean we all do things that we don’t want people to know about. The shame lies in the deception. Once again, I am not trying to bash anyone, I just want us all as a race to have a promising future and right now it is being corrupted with HIV and AIDS.

Several Kent States had varied opinions on the issue of men on the “Down Low.”

Alonzo Clark, Pan African Studies Major, says, “I do not feel that it is right to lie to girlfriends and wives, but I can understand where DL men are coming from because black society make it difficult for a black male to be a homosexual. Many times they are stereotyped and ridiculed for being gay.”

“If a girl wants to know more about a man’s sexual orientation ask questions and notice his reactions,” Clark continues. “Investigate. Instead of being so interested in where he works at, find out what he’s been with.”

Biology major Eric Seigers says, “I think that they should be man enough to come out the closet.”

Shaneec Hudson, political science major, says, “I think that it is wrong; a man should be honest with the person that he is with and give her the option to do what is right for her. He should not feel different if she acts different (i.e. asking him to wear a condom). It makes me make sure that I know and feel comfortable and can be honest with the man before I engage in anything serious with him.”

“The AIDS epidemic is horrible, especially when it can be prevented,” she continued. “I think that it is sad if you are married that someone would set you up for something so deadly. Make sure that you trust the person that you are with. Go with your gut instincts. Don’t be afraid to ask questions.”
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.
inside black greek life

by: Adria Barbour
Sigma Gamma Rho Inc./Alpha Phi Alpha Inc.

As I dressed to go to a Sigma Gamma Rho Inc. party, I thought I knew what to expect. Drunken males, overexposed females, loud music and images of scattered beer bottles ran through my head as I thought about covering a sorority party. I was surprised as I paid the $2 dollar admission and walked into the Rathskellar.

The crowd was a good size, not overly intimidating and was in no way resembling the nightmare I imagined it to be. Some women walked around the dimly lit room displaying the royal blue and gold letters of the sorority and were talking, laughing and dancing. Men gathered together in huddles, making jokes and checking out the women. In the center of the room, there was a large group of people dancing in circles to rap and R&B. All Greeks, both Sigma Gamma Rho and Alpha Phi Alpha Inc. made known that they were proud to be in their organization.

“I love my organization with all my heart,” said LeAnder Nicholson, junior theater major and president of the Kent chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Inc. “It is the best frat to ever exist.”

“From being on the outside, I saw the sisterhood and that was something I wanted to be a part of,” said Aliyah Wilson, senior psychology major and member of Sigma Gamma Rho Inc.

The more I asked around, the more I found that not all people at the Rat were members of a specific organization. There were Greeks there as well as non-Greeks.

Shavon Colston, a graduate community counseling major, is a regular at black Greek events. She said the crowd was small compared to other parties she’d been to.

“There would definitely be more people if a fraternity threw it,” she said.

Sigma Gamma Rho Inc. throws icebreakers about twice every semester. Committed to interacting with the students, they also have study tables every Wednesday and are involved with the Renaissance Ball. A hairdresser and a nail technician come from Cleveland to pamper the girls at a discount price for those that want to take advantage of the opportunity.

Erica Grant, junior fashion design major and president of Sigma Gamma Rho Inc., said this year there are seminars planned as well as a fashion show at the end of the year.

Nationally, Sigma Gamma Rho Inc., in partnership with March of Dimes and Habitat for Humanity, sponsors workshops, activities and services that are geared towards educating people of color. The Rejesta V. Perry Birthright Program helps people obtain the information they need about health, educational and social services to lead a healthy life. There’s an emphasis on women with AIDS or who are HIV positive, an especially relevant program in light of the information that 75 percent of the new AIDS cases in America are women of color. There is Project Reassurance, which seeks to educate pregnant teens and teen mothers about the importance of taking proper care of a baby before and after it’s born. Wee Savers teaches how to use one’s finances. There are also programs that establish low-income housing in different cities, programs that help get school supplies to needy children and also programs focusing on the importance of donating bone marrow.

This sorority’s reach extends far beyond the United States. In Africa, Sigma Gamma Rho Inc. helps and organization called Africare provide African women with grain grinders to help them farm.

Sigma Gamma Rho Inc. was started in 1922 at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana by a group of young black female educators. The purpose of them coming together was to create a unity of black female teachers like themselves. Women from other professions were later accepted.

The founders of Sigma Gamma Rho Inc. believed that higher education was a means to foster awareness and responsibility to ones society. This sorority’s main focus is on health and education, essential things for a functioning civilization.

Alpha Phi Alpha Inc. was founded in 1906, the first intercollegiate black fraternity ever to be created. Alpha Phi Alpha has produced some of the most active and powerful civil rights leaders known.
“[I chose this fraternity] because of the people Alpha Phi Alpha produces; positive people like Martin Luther King, Jr., W.E.B. Dubois, Jessie Owens and Thurgood Marshall,” said Darius Peterson, a senior art and technology major at Youngstown State University.

To him, these people embody the very principles that Alpha Phi Alpha was built upon.

“It [the fraternity] was founded on scholarship, manly deeds and love for all mankind. I always wanted to do something positive and Alpha Phi Alpha does positive things,” Peterson said.

Alpha Phi Alpha Inc. was created to strengthen the bonds of Brotherhood between African-Americans. Its main focus is to educate and strengthen the black community. They have initiated programs to help people understand the importance of their civic duties, their responsibility to their community and their commitment to themselves.

At Kent State University, Alpha Phi Alpha Inc. is involved in many community service projects. They are involved in an effort with BUS and Delta Sigma Theta Inc. where volunteers take people where they need to go to vote. The fraternity also helped build a playground for the Children’s Development Center, which is next to WKSU. Every first Friday of the month there is Alpha Night, a get-together with games, movies and music. Also, before the end of the semester, there is a fashion show and a poetry contest planned. Non-members are allowed to participate as well as attend.

This year Alpha Phi Alpha Inc. established the Oscar Ritchie Fund. Oscar Ritchie Hall is being renovated in 2008, but there isn’t going to be new furniture in the building. At every event that Alpha Phi Alpha Inc. sponsors, there will be a donation box where people can donate to help purchase new furniture once the renovations take place.

National programs sponsored by the fraternity include A Voteless People is a Hopeless People, Go-to-High-School, Go-to-College, and Project Alpha, a program that teaches the consequences of teenage pregnancy for men. This is an especially interesting program since it seems that most projects such as this focus on the female and the consequences teenage pregnancy have for her. Project Alpha focuses on the mental as well as the physical. They educate men on the human body, sexually transmitted diseases and contraceptives, as well as the roles of fatherhood, sexual abuse and violence and abstinence.

“They teach you things you need to know to become a good man,” Nicholson said. “You can’t be a good father unless you are a good man.”

The Go-to-High-School, Go-to-College program puts emphasis on academic excellence throughout high school and college. This program provides strong mentors for young men to look up to outside of school, and also shows them how to succeed in school.

The “Voteless People is a Hopeless People” program was created back in the days when African-Americans had the right to vote, but were either intimidated by racism, or lacked knowledge to make an informed decision. Now most blacks have the means to getting the information they need and all that seems to be lacking is the motivation.

“Well, I think it vital for black men to go out and vote. We are the leaders of our race, it’s important for black men to show that leadership. If black men don’t go out and vote it’s like they aren’t talking care of their responsibility. The president we put in office dictates how our life will be for the next four years,” said Peterson.

With the empowered, intelligent people these black Greek organizations produce, one would think people would be standing in line to congratulate these students. Unfortunately stereotypes and ignorance prevent some people from uplifting their brothers and sisters. One stereotype is that people change when they are accepted into the organization.

“People say you change,” Wilson said. “But if they really didn’t know you in the first place, they can’t say you’ve changed.”

“People say you are arrogant,” Nicholson said. What people need to realize is that people do change. You hang out with different people, and it’s not that you are ignoring your old friends. I just love my brothers. I love to be around them all day.”

Another stereotype, or rather a fear that people have is that there are dangerous hazing rituals that one must go through to become a Greek. Members of Sigma Gamma Rho and Alpha Phi Alpha all gave the same response to this assumption: all Greek organizations are non-hazing organizations.

“I wasn’t scared of anything all because of the background I came from. I knew I would make it; it’s just a process. Nothing happens to you to where your life is in danger,” said Peterson.

“There wasn’t anything to be afraid of. You just needed to have the commitment,” Wilson said.

The misconception that is most commonly associated with sororities and fraternities is that one would be paying for friends. This false impression arose from the knowledge that one has to pay a fee once in the sorority. In turn, questions are raised about the loyalty of these “friends” once a person is initiated into the establishment. The truth is that one is paying for connections, not friends. Peterson said Alpha Phi Alpha Inc. helped him to obtain the internship he currently has to come and teach at this university.

One prevailing misconception is that black Greek functions are for blacks only. This is not true. All events are open to anyone who wants to attend, Nicholson said.

“We still separate, we are still cliquish,” Nicholson said. “We have to co-exist to live on this campus.”

Despite the misunderstandings surrounding what Greeks do or how they act, Sigma Gamma Rho and Alpha Phi Alpha are committed to improving the life of students on the Kent campus.

“We do a lot of community projects,” said Grant. “We want to keep students aware of current events going on and community issues. We don’t just throw parties.”

Nicholson said that Alpha Phi Alpha is trying to get away from the mistaken “party” image that fraternities are associated with. “We are trying to change the way people think about fraternities, our fraternity,” Nicholson said.

“We are thinking of cutting down on our once a month party,” he said. “Black folks complain that all we do is throw parties, but they show up late to the parties and no one wants to do anything but party.”


by: Jacala Barnett

It is amazing that every day I see another white person that I have not yet seen in the four weeks that I have been here. At the same time, it is a shame that I had already seen all of the black population of Kent University in the first week.

This observation is very believable with the ratio of the minority students given by Chuck Rickard, the Associate Vice President of Enrollment Services. According to his data, 3,700 freshmen were expected to attend the university and only 11.3% of these freshmen were Asian American, African American, Latino and Native American.

Thanks to those who struggled for the black department in the 1960s, we now have the opportunity to be exposed to African experiences through the Pan African Studies department. Although, we are spread thin throughout the campus, should we allow ourselves to fade in and out of our environment just because we are black?

Throughout my whole academic career I was brought up in majority white schools and only learned about European history and culture. But during my six week experiences in Nigeria, I learned that all men originated in Africa. Why are we just exposed to European culture and not taught about Africa?

Yolanda Walker, freshman pan-African studies major, says, "What we have been taught is distorted history, and everything that we learned was a big lie. I always questioned my teachers on why we only learn of recent history and not the many years before that. I then realized that our white teachers did not want to teach us about those years because then they would begin speaking of the history of Africa."

During my years in high school, and surely many of yours, all I learned of African heritage was the slave trade. In Nigeria the students are much more informed of black heritage such as: African American scholars, activists, and even the constructions of the Egyptian pyramids.

While black people complain about the short-age of African culture on campus, can we all honestly say that we are involved in the development of the Pan African Studies department? While Yolanda Walker is enrolled in Black Experience and attends the Black United Student meetings regularly, other students use the cop-out of not being able to invest enough time into the department.
Another serious factor could be what was brought to my attention during the first few days of school. My Black Experience professor, Idris Syed, stated that, "The Pan African Studies Department is not always mentioned as well as it should be to the incoming freshmen by the student advisors."

On May 21, 1968, Black United Students organized for the improvement of black student life on Kent State campus. Approximately 85% of the black students of Kent State walked off of the campus in protest of the racist treatment received and the lack of educational support. The organization was pivotal in forming the Pan African Studies department.

In the past, the department had many supporters in the development of the organization, including many sororities and fraternities. Larry Simpson, the first president of the Black United Students, was also a member of the fraternity Kappa Alpha Psi. So why are fraternities and sororities involvement in the community scarce? Jason Settles feels, "Many of the students are unmotivated, don't care, or some might even lack knowledge about there even being black history."

Do you know the substantial difference of Caucasians graduating compared to the African-American graduating rate? In 1998, only 251 African Americans graduated from Kent State University compared to the soaring numbers of 4,207 Caucasians. In 2002, a brisk rise came about with 270 African-Americans graduating, but whites still graduated with an improved number of 4,618. This might be a reason why the black population at the university is so low. Settles believes, "Maybe the black students feel threatened by the overbearing number of white students so they eventually leave the school, or they do not even consider attending the school at all."

Do you think a minority wants to be apart of an institution in which their own people are doing poorly?

Yolanda does not feel discouraged by this, but instead she goes on to say that, "We should try to improve the numbers of graduating African Americans, but this should not discourage us from attending."

Rekha Sharma, a student at KSU, states that many of the students come from neighboring counties that are predominantly white and that might be a reason why the black enrollment rate is so low. Minorities are often pulled to schools with a higher minority rate, where they would feel more comfortable in their surroundings.

Walker feels that, "Black students are not pushed as much as the white students are to do well, and when we are I feel that we are pushed too much." It could be attributed to the lack of interest in courses or the feeling of being of a minority culture. If this is true, should we not push towards more educational support like our ancestral brothers and sisters did in the 1960s? Or should we just sit back and go along for the ride that has for so long been causing the destruction of our black people's educational journey?

We truly are the chocolate sprinkles spread throughout this buffet of vanilla ice cream. But at the same time, we must never forget how bland vanilla ice cream can be without the sweet chocolate candies that we provide for the dessert.
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kuumba

creative expression

cover girl

by: Tsidgiyah Baht Israel

I've been succumbed by worry in the event to capture real life. Fantasy has expired and perfection is at hand as my hands turn keys inside doorknobs that are fastened to doors that hide imperfection. As I took the shades of materialism and placed them upon my eye, my perception of beauty dampened. Mascara, Lip liners, and a hole in my tongue was my panacea of a popular façade. Razors have scarred the epidermis under the hairy existence above my eyes, under my arms, and the twins that are responsible for the movement of my feet. Mundane influence of ugliness plagued my position from simplicity to subtle self-hatred. I was dependent on all apparatus of shame believe I could become white Barbie. Who am I?

boredom

by: Diana Huntley

I was on hold for hours, forced to listen to the Muzak version of "Muskat Love" over and over again until I started considering recipes featuring muskrat, after skinning one and stretching the fur on a board to dry it out so it could join its brothers in an overpriced coat warming the back of a dangerously thin matron wearing too much eye-make up who misguided believing the only way she could announce to the world that she had been successful was to drape herself in dead animals and step in front of other waiting in line to pay for their purchases at the department store, stationing herself in front of the free samples or herbal hand cream which prevented others from trying it on, while she pretended not to notice their frustrated glaring as they impatiently waited for her to move out of their way, enabling them to push their digits into the aromatic goo of full of emollients and impotent vitamins which promised to strip years off their hands return to at least one small fraction of their bodies as bit of the lost youth that they had missed for more years than they cared to admit as they looked longingly at the flat stomachs, firm buttocks and upright breasts of their neighbor’s daughters who looked so devastatingly naturally beautiful as to make the middle-aged men in the neighborhood forget their paunches and nose hairs and aging wives and imagine kissing the full lips that expressed the vapid thoughts of a teenage ["Your call is important to us, so please remain on the line..."].

the secret garden

by: Kevin L. Clark

While the sky is black, only lit by the twinkling of a million stars, I lay back and I wish that I could read your mind to know you deepest feelings by far; Let us share that mystery, if you listen to your heart tonight, it'll tell you where you should be, With me, listening to melodies that we can sing together, If we make music, with our bodies harmonizing passion, we can sing this forever, While candles light the pathway to your 'secret garden' -- I hold you tightly, I need to be with you, body touching body, doing this all night, see... Can I touch you there? Revealing the secrets that Victoria didn't tell you or me, No one needed to say anything else, yet our lips conversate throughout the ages, Embarking on a historic movement as time turns this century's pages, I've never wanted anyone as much as I want you, With just one touch from your finger to my lips, telling me to be quiet, I see that this is true, If this is a secret, then it stays between us, Let me whisper in your ear about situations we can get into -- passion, trust, lust, Our heart beats move in sync with our bodies, hear the music flowing through the air, Ecstasy combined with the love for each other, let us have no other care, No worries, just let this be our night, But by the way we're going, we'll be seeing the morning light, Can I keep you satisfied? If you say, "Yes," shall I let it continue? I'm only doing what a man is supposed to do -- Take care of you! Let your body be at ease, as you let your hair down, While I give you a massage that let's the stress be like a breeze of air -- away blown, If you think that I have what you need, then by all means, take it, This is your night, I'll step up to you clothed naked, You owe it to yourself, whatever you must do, then I'll welcome you, consider it my invitation, I'll just selfishly take a little for myself, but still with no hesitation, Until the light of the Sun reaches the horizon, We can stay united until we can't fight it, and we pass pleasure's peak, and from then on, We'll lay together, smiling, rejoicing in all that we have shared...
hmmmm...

by: Angenita Childs

As I sit here, I wonder
Pain in my head
When will it stop
Perhaps when Will it
Can someone tell me about it
The pain in my head...pounding for days
Why? What is going on?
What ponderance in my head is
Making this happen to me. I mean, really? What is it?
I wonder how did this happen, again?
Wondering will the pounding ever end? Stop
The voices clouding me up?
What are they sayin'?
Run? Hide? Stay?
Hmmm...

Are the thoughts I think really thoughts...My thoughts?
Are were they placed there by the world, the world that clouds my judgment
The world that eats at my soul, the world that makes it easy for me to be corrupt
The world in which I live, the struggle that I fight....Were the Thoughts placed here?
Just to cloud my judgment, destroy my soul, and corrupt me?
Hmmm...

I am here for a reason, to fight the corruption, or so I think...I am here to build my soul, or so I think, I'm here to think above the clouds and with that thought...The pounding stops.

our bodies intertwined

by: Shannon Crenshaw

I lay peaceful just as though you are all mine I hold you ever so close
Knowing by tomorrow I may not even have a choice, in,
Whether you say or whether you go I have this moment this very day
This passion locked and held in me these feelings I feel I pray they are real
You explored every part of me you explored you found my hidden mysteries
I hold on too afraid to let go I feel you inside of me I am so afraid tough
You look into my eyes you see the tears I start to cry how'd you get there
How'd you find the key I woke early that morning to find you next to me
I needed to be sure I had not dreamed all that passion and that my Ecstasy

all my hidden mysteries

by: Shannon Crenshaw

...Men themselves wonder just what they see in me...
--Maya Angelou,
“Phenomenal Woman”

They can't help but to care
They want to find my hidden mysteries
I've tried to show them, they just can't seem to see
I'll run through them once again, watch closely, this is me
It's my daily walk and my daily talk, hell, just plain old me
It's the flow of my hair and the way I may stare
It's the glow of my skin, it's the way my backside ends
It's the stride in my walk, the lean when I talk
It's the softness of my lips, the tease to know you may not get
It's the books I carry when I put you on hold
It's the job I strive for until I reach my goal
It's when I put myself first and put you last
It's when you open your heart to cry
When your best friend just died
It's when you lost your job and you see I'm still behind
It's the long hours on the phone,
Whispers I give when I don't want to be alone
When you ask yourself just what you see in me,
It's all this and more: all my hidden mysteries

i-my enemy

Held together by the strength of another...
Incapable of fighting off these spirits alone...
An emotional-ocean: vulnerable, incapable
Of fighting off these spirits alone...
Fear, inconsideration, greed, power, impatience,
Mistrust, carelessness, blatant disrespect, hatin'
To be resurrected, in constant opposition to
the direct effect that righteousness brings...that righteousness sings loud and clear
These songs are held near and dear to the souls that let go...
And fought this battle with their eyes closed...
Impossible to fight with my fist tied behind my back...
Or, I lack understanding of the war..
Being attacked and reprimanded at the shores of my
God-given wisdom...incapable of fighting off these spirits...alone...

tyseanna

I'll never see you smile or walk
I'll never see you eat or hear you talk
I'll never shelter you from your fears
Nor will I ever hold you near
There will be no birthday #1
You'll never see Chuck E. Cheese or have any fun
There'll be no graduation or any proms
No boys to meet, or cheerleading pom-poms
There will be no Christmases or any other holiday
The reason is, I took you away
You'll never know Daddy, Brother, or me
You'll never be able to wake up and see
You'll never be able to go to school
Now will you know the Golden Rule
“Do unto others as you want others to do unto you.”
If this is to be, why did I take the joy of life from you?
Daddy, Brother, and I feel the same
But we all know I am to blame
Everything I've said is true
I want you to know that
I love you.
Our office is open daily and located in the Tri Towers Rotunda

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together, we will revolutionize your business and brand. z-axis is your liberation from the Times New Roman empire.
you've kissed my soul
by: Kevin L. Clark

I've seen Heaven at a glance, it looks exactly like you,
You're more than anything I could've imagined -- a dream come true,
Words escape my breath, but no sound can be made,
Only turned in to the foundation of our relation laid....
Down upon the past, buried, do you really understand me?!
I hope you do because you're the calm in this World of insanity,
In the midst of War, you're the Peace in my soul,
You're amazing to be able to grace me with your being so won-der-ful,
In these arms of mine, you're irreplaceable, I hope you know you're my
one and only,
I only want to be with you, without that, I'm one and lonely,
In your eyes, times knows no bounds, in it we live on forever,
But here and now, I want you to know that no matter the weather,
Whether rain or shine, sail, snow, blizzard, flash flood, sun falls from up
above,
I'll be with you till the end, because in the beginning it's you I love,
You're incredible, to be able to do some much, in the midst of so much
chaos,
I can't believe that you've been with me, I can't believe it's you I haven't
lost,
I'm not complete, I'd go through hellfire and brimstone just to save your
life,
But you've saved mine so many times, that I want you to be my wife,
Yes... I know that that is a bold statement to make,
But I've done so many risky things with you that this is a risk I'm willing
and hoping to take,
What would I do without you, Ma? I wouldn't be complete!
You complete me to the point where it seems as if I've accomplished
some feat,
You've shown me what it means to have compassion and patience,
You're a Queen amongst those who can't hold a candle and since...
I am with you, I've made strides in my life to the point where it's tears I
can't even hide,
Just as long as when I wake up in the morning, it's you by my side,
You take good care of me, so it's only Love in my heart that I do the same
to you,
I trust you and I know you love me with every fiber of your being, too!
Through all the up's and down's, I don't look at them as arguments, only
creative differences,
After that we engage in spur of the moment instances,
Loving you is a natural feeling, that's like a gentle breeze blowing through
the night's sky,
This will linger for all times, never to leave... why?!
No need to ask such a question, but an answer is one that I'll give,
When our two souls touch... I bloom like a flower towards you, ready to
live,
Never wanting to die, unless it'd be in your arms,
Because even if I wasn't living, I know that you'd still keep me from
harm!
The secret places that you've touched, only your fingerprints are on my
heart,
Loving you constantly, shall never end, only continuing to start,
And getting better and stronger with each day,
And the more that I share with you, adds onto those 100 Ways...
A mystic sunrise shows me looking into your eyes,
Your touch is gifted, and it takes me beyond the skies,
I love you so much, that emotions are more clear than blurred,
I willing to take any obstacle down just as long as you're by my side, I
ain't scurried,
There are no more words that I can't express to tell you what you should
already know,
It just that I had to let the World, in the midst of turmoil, see the wonders
that I have to show...

definition of a man
by: Angenita Childs

Hey, Boo
Lookin' good
Are you a MAN?
No, not a male, that's apparent- A MAN.
I see your car, hmmm nice
I see your clothes and ice
I see your smile, so bright
Debonair, lookin' so tight
But, you, my dear, are plagued with luxuries.
Tell me-
Can you give me conviction, strength in your words
Not childish "word" play.
Can you show me your struggle
Not your "struggle" in the easy way
Can you show me your position
Not what "position" you play
Can you show me your heart
Not the "heart" in the streets
Can you show me your love
Not the "love" you have for women
Can you show me your warmth
Not external "warmth", internal
These are the things that can make a difference...for this is my
definition of a MAN...
My Male with an Attitude of Negro decent

i apologize, my black man
by: Angenita Childs

I apologize, my Black man, for not having faith from the start
I apologize, my Black man, for not giving you enough heart
I apologize, my Black man, for not getting you through this
I apologize, my Black man, for not doing as you wish
I understand your struggle & I feel your pain
All these things we feel are driving us insane
But, my Black man,
I need your back,
I need your love,
To stay on track.
I apologize, my Black man, for bashing your tries
I apologize, my Black man, for not ceasing your cries
I apologize, my Black man, for making you weak
I apologize, my Black man, for not listening to you speak
This life we live are living, full of anger and deceit
Has caused us both to be meager and weak
The way we live now, in total defeat
Our lives, our souls
Just will not meet
I apologize, my Black man, for not wanting to share
I apologize, my Black man, for not showing I care
I apologize, my Black man, for filling you with doubt
I apologize, my Black man, for I scream and shout
Please understand, my mind-set comes from abuses endured
I can't apologize for wounds incurred
Understand me, my Black man,
It is you I adore,
It is you I love
Will love forever more
I apologize for my wrongs & lack of appreciation
I apologize for my hatefulness
I love you, my Black man, without depreciation.
fear and love...

by: Angenita Childs

Love...
Brings fear to so many
I am one of those many
Who Fears Love...
Why?
Love in my eyes upon Pain
and Fear...always Uneasy
Unhappiness equals Depression
And so on...
Love I gave me, yet I continue to love for it
Love has let me down, yet I continue to search for it
Love has lied and Love has cheated
Still, my quest for Love remains
However, I am afraid of Love, too...
I am afraid of the hurt that Love has brought
Therefor I love equals Fear...
The Fear of hurt, the Fear of rejection
The Fear of being lonely for all my days...
I knew Love is supposed to nurture...grip me and hold me, cradle me...but how can something that is supposed to be so wonderful...cause so much Fear...
That's why I look to you...to take away that Fear...
And replace it with real Love.
And if you feel as I do, and Love is Fearful to you as well...
Then we'll walk down the path to real Love, hand in hand, guiding each other into new and unfamiliar territory...Fear cannot stand in our way...No more Fear...
It's Love...

may I...

by: Kevi "W"

May I kiss your heart just so I can take it in my attention?
Even with my imagination, you're God's creation.
And I am glad that Him and I have the same thing in common...
in mind...
You...through the rise and fall during our time,
We have been able to stay true to each other.
No matter what! You have been able to say that, "I love him," and I can say that...I love her.
in the face of anyone who doubts us,
May I wrap my arms around you, so you know it's you that I trust?
Even if sometimes you may not act like love is guaranteed,
I do love you, maybe, sometimes love is all one man may need!
Please give it all to me, I'm selfish! I can be that. may I?
If so, than all my stress is gone with the morning day sky.
May I kiss your cheek? May I hold your hand?
So with the words I speak, I can hope that you surely understand,
May I love you with all my love in every fiber of my being?
I hope so...because I wouldn't want my chances to be fleeting.
May I just lie beside you as the night arrives?
I don't understand why...but I think that once time flies,
That our love is gone, but it's limitless with every hour,
May I love you, care for my woman, as sacred as a flower...

love me in my abundance

by: Angenita Childs

Love my hips lips and thighs,
As thunderous as they may be
Love my torso, feet, and hands
As mammal as they may be
Love my cheeks, face, and knees
As they are roundly sculpted
Love my breast, behind, and elbows
As bountiful as they may be
Love me for not being average in size
Or height
Something to hold at night
Something soft and sweet
And as bountiful as I am
Lay on my cushion for comfort
Stroke my abundant belly and thighs
Always remember...I've got more than
Those girls...in body and mind
I've got more than those girls
in spirit and heart
I've got more than those girls
Will ever have...
What am I?
Of course, the Overly Abundant Beautiful Black Woman
That only a real man could love
So keep your little model chicks
Keep your money grubbing Video girls
A real man knows no future
Like the women like me behold
We are tired of the back burner
Now we stand out
Who had your back
When that girl ran out?
You betta look again
Oh, my brother
To love a big soul
Damn, there is no other
For I have more
In spirit and soul.
I am more abundant in body, and mind
Something you will see...just put in the time

living proof

by: James A. Badges

From slavery to oppression
to extravagance to obsession
with a love for style
with a sly grin or smile
we are living proof
with our backs against the wall
we fought through it all
from the 1800's to the 1920's
from the 1960's to the 21st century
we're still fighting
but we are living proof
from rhythm and blues
to jazz and rock and roll
we built this country
from the sky scrapers down to the dirt roads
though no credit given or recognition
we still fight with faded premonitions
so as time passes
while ya'll sip on wine glasses
think about what you can do
to be living proof.
good mourning
by: Nicole Moats

Up. Down
Not us

For life unfit
Stand. Sit

Shipwrecks
Love. Sex

Need. Want
More blunt

People. You
Not death
uhuru is a twice-yearly published magazine of Black United Students (BUS) at Kent State University, and you should be part of it.

Qualified magazine applicants need not necessarily be black, united, or even a student. We at uhuru are a diverse collective spanning the caucasoid to the negroid, dedicated to exploring the realities and emerging trends in young, minority living.

Sorority girls and black power revolutionaries are employed as our writers, photographers and management.

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The opportunity to apply for a position in future uhuru activities is open to anyone who thinks they can do the job better than it was done before.

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
before we go on, look back over the poetry section one more time...

...and notice that you weren't in it. why them and not you? the mind boggles, and reparations are owed. the progressively-minded staff of uhuru, however, would like to give you a chance to make up for this injustice of publication. simply fill in the following items, and experience the fortune and glory that comes with publication in uhuru, one of kent state university's most prominent student magazines.

title:
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(your name here)

poem:
(whatever's on your mind, but the shorter the better)

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uhuru
attn: “kuumba”
101 taylor hall
kent state university
kent, oh.
44240
anyone can play

by: Erika Meyers

He puts his hands together and bows his head over the drum like a warrior showing respect before battle. With the djembe firmly plugged between his legs his fingers move across the face of the drum. The complication of the rhythms pick up as the palms of his hands begin to blur with the rapid intensity.

The piece has begun.

There are no other musicians playing in the background, only students sitting and listening. The room is void of fancy spotlights and pyrotechnics, the only special effect is the library of information inside the percussionist’s head as he shows how many different rhythms can be played with one drum and a set of bells wrapped to his ankle. Lips parted, eyes fixed on everything but the instrument, speed and complexity increases until his hands are barely visible between swift motions on and off the skin until...Smack!

In one quick moment the song had ended and his hands returned to human form. For the moment, Mamady Keita can rest before his next song. Before the performance, Keita explained the globalization of his music and his passion.

“Karinkadjan Kinde (his teacher) is not dead because I am here today. I feel that I am his messenger across the world. Today I am passing on that which has been transmitted to me,” Keita explains.

This concert was a recording from the video “Mamady Keita Djembe Kan, The Sound of The Djembe.” This native of Guinea, West Africa, performed and recorded the video in Santa Cruz, Seattle, St. Louis, and San Diego.

Despite differences in origin and language barriers, Keita was still successful in bringing his passion for percussion to America. Perhaps what makes the African percussion style so unique is the differences, musically, between America and Africa, especially when it comes to ensemble work.

The collective is not a common term when thinking about American music. It refers to the idea that everybody in the group has their own place within the ensemble. Not one musician stands out, yet none of them fade into the background. Each musician has their own part to play with respect to the people standing beside them.

Also, the influence of religion can carry with it different purposes for percussionists beyond the form of entertainment. Haiti, for instance, is one area where the Voodoo religion brings its own spirituality and inspiration for percussionists.
From the beginning, the making of the drum is a sacred ritual in itself. With candles, the drum makers draw a veve as well as offer liquor, food, and prayers before the tree can be cut down. (A veve is a drawing done in cornmeal on the floor to bring forth the power of the Loa Deity) These offerings are present throughout the making of the drum.

Of course, not everybody has to believe in Voodoo to be a percussionist or part of an ensemble. Keïta, for example, gives a solo performance and still understands the impact of his instrument in life and all things involved.

"The Djembe communicates with the water," Keïta says. "The Djembe communicates with the trees, the ocean and with the dead."

If the style of music played reflects its culture, then what effect has history had on African percussion? In addition to many other factors, slavery impacted the organization of rhythms in rituals sang by slaves in the fields during the colonial period.

Also, music has its own history in Haiti during the 1940's. To attract tourists, drum ensembles performed voodoo influenced rhythms along with dances. Unfortunately, these ensembles were dispersed when terrorism occurred and many of the musicians left in the 1950s to move to New York.

Even though there are many African influenced percussionists in America, it is still difficult to find materials and instruments. However, there are some solutions that do not involve going into the woods and cutting down trees.

One of the stores that have African drums available is Sam Ash. Also, there are traditional American instruments like electric guitars and basses available as well.

Also, if you are interested in this style of music, the Internet may be your best resource. Web sites like rhythmtraders.com offer listening samples, opportunities to buy the CD's, videos, books, instructional material, and listings of upcoming concerts and workshops off the net.

With the help of the Internet and videos, it is possible to reach out to other cultures and understand them better, as well as, support their work. Regardless of religion or origin, the power in music is bringing people together.

Keïta states, "We must live together, we must celebrate together. We must play music together, eat together. We must dance together. We must have unity... peace and give respect."
I have a story to tell you. It is the story of who I am and who I am not. It is the story that keeps on changing, but somehow always stays the same. This is the story of the foundations of my life, foundations that would mold and shape, shake and rock the experience I would have in this country of America.

When I was a kid, I remember going to the doctor’s office with my mom. The receptionist there asked, “Mrs. Yamokoski, today is an appointment for your son. Where is he?” I would be standing next to her, but was never recognized to be her son. Today, when I go to the airport, I am given a funny look. The airline staff looks at my passport and they say, “Hmm...‘Yamokoski.’ That’s a funny last name. What kind of background are you?” When I give them my answer they look at me skeptically. And when I think about the answer I just gave I wonder if answered correctly. And that’s where my identity crisis begins.

You see I call myself African-American, but I’m bi-racial and my last name is Polish because I am adopted. My parents are both Caucasian. My sister, who is also adopted but not my biological sister, happens to be a Filipino Asian. My biological parents gave me up for adoption when I was just a few days old. I have not seen them since. Both of my biological parents had epilepsy and were afraid for my safety lest they have a seizure while caring for me as a baby. I know that my biological father is African American and my biological mother is Caucasian with a German background. I was adopted by my parents when I was six months old. Although my sister and I never resembled the face of our adopted parents, they were nevertheless our parents and we were their children, and we loved each other very much. The example my interracial family practiced every single day was the example I saw for the entire human race to live by, to live and love one another for who we are on the inside, for who we are as a human family, and not by the color of our skin.

As a young child this was a reality to me until the day a schoolmate came up to me and wanted to play ‘slavery,’ where they would be my master and I would be their nigger slave. I didn’t play.

I went home that day and relayed what happened to my parents. I was puzzled, confused, and hurt, and only knew that what happened didn’t seem right. But I think it was my parents who were hurt the most, because they knew what those words meant and it would be them who would have to painfully explain this new concept to me. I remember them crying with me that day, for our blissful existence as a family was now tainted by a societal history whose pain, suffering, and sin had entered our home.

Throughout my childhood and into my teenage years I would be the target of racial slurs. I was told by my high school principal to go home and change my t-shirt because it had a picture of Malcolm X on it. I was kicked in the jaw by a classmate who didn’t want black people on the school bus.

I had my head smacked against a brick wall and my throat choked for reporting a classmate who had consistently been harassing me in school for the color of my skin. Even parents of a friend of mine in church told their daughter that she may not go to prom with me because it wouldn’t be right for her to date a black person. My parents and I were constantly working with authorities to combat this racism, but most of the time the powers that be did little to change anything.

But things did change for me when I went away to college. I was in a more multiracial environment with smarter people who didn’t use the ignorance of racism to judge me or anyone else. And I myself became wiser by toughening up my emotions and using my intellect more than my feelings to understand and deal with my past. I read about black history. My room was decorated with black art. I had more friends and adult mentors who cared about and understood my background and could defend and support me. And I made a life changing journey to Africa after graduating in 2000.

I stayed a year in Kenya, East Africa. It was during this year that I not only made friendships that are kept even today, but I also met my best friend and wife, Gathinja, whose article is also featured in this issue of uhuru.

The ironic thing about my time in Kenya was during one of our many trips to the village. Children and adults in the ‘shags,’ as we call it, only sometimes would meet people from the city, let alone people from other countries. When people saw me they began to stare and giggle. “Mzungu” they would whisper to each other. “Mzungu.”

This Swahili word means “white person.”
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When I learned what they were saying I was first confused, then somewhat annoyed. I asked Gathinja, "Why are they calling me that? I'm black!"

Gathinja would reply, "It's because you're bi-racial. You're lighter than they are. The villagers are all darker skinned. They never see different tones of skin color. They think you're white because you're a lighter shade. Let me explain to them for you." Then Gathinja explained to them that half my ancestry was from Africa, but that I was mixed. This only produced more giggles and laughter.

I then said to Gathinja, "This is just great, babe. I'm called a nigger in America for being considered black and when I come to my roots I'm considered white!" I then signaled for the children to come to me and touch the skin on my arm. Gathinja translated to them for me saying, "He's saying, 'I'm black like you, except I have a white mother.'" Villagers followed me in amazement as word of me spread and I was talked to and looked at for the rest of the day.

Who am I in the world?

Where is my identity? The answer does not come easily to me anymore. But one thing I do know is that I have adopted the gift of love and acceptance and understanding because I've been the target of a great hate and extraordinary circumstances. I am rooted, in my family, in my wife, in my job, in my home, in Africa, and in America.

Looking back, maybe my adoptive parents could have done things a bit differently. I can honestly say that maybe things would have been easier for me if we hadn't lived in all white neighborhoods. But I don't pass blame. Those are the cards that were dealt to my family and we came out on top despite them. In fact, I would be a different person had I not had these circumstances. My parents did the best they could and they were the only white people I've ever known to come close to really understanding the black experience. For this I commend them. To me, my parents were the salvation for white people. I believe it if wasn't for my upbringing with them, then I may have damned the whole white race for their crimes against me and my people.

In closing, I have to admit I've always looked curiously at families that look alike, those families that are biologically related. In my mind I say, "Wow, what would my biological family look like if I could see them. Would I look like them? I wonder...I wonder."

This curiosity was fulfilled in a way recently because my sister just had her first baby. Gathinja and I went to visit her and her baby recently. We pulled up to her house and she walked out, holding her baby with his face next to hers. My heart leapt when I saw the likeness. It astounded me and brought tears of joy to my eyes. And I said to myself, “So that's what it's like, that's what its like.”

This is my story. Identity crisis? Perhaps. But I would never ask for it in any other way. May you be inspired to love your families, whoever they are. May you know through your life what it means to connect with another human being in love and wonderment, for we are created to be as one family, to live in harmony in this beautiful creation of humankind. Identity crisis? Perhaps, just perhaps.
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Hello, my name is tu dhubutu

(let's dare) a perspective of a kenyan african starting over in america

by: Gathinja M. Yamokoski

Nothing would have prepared me for the culture shock I have experienced for the two years I have been in America.

I was born and raised in Kenya, East Africa in the capital city of Nairobi which has a population of three million people. I wouldn’t be in the United States now if it were not for meeting a wonderful man who is now my best friend and husband, Jonah Yamokoski.

Jonah is an American and had been chosen by the Presbyterian Church to work as a Young Adult Volunteer for a 4,000 member Presbyterian Church located in downtown Nairobi. We met outside of his work assignment and that meeting was the beginning of my learning what is like to be black in America.

In the first days of our relationship, I remember my husband asking me as we walked through town, “Are people always like this?” and I would ask with a huff, “Like what?!” Jonah said, “Everyone here seems so care free. What’s going on? People are relaxed and having a good time. How can this be in such a struggling nation where most things are run down with poverty and corruption?” Having lived in Kenya all my life, I didn’t understand what my husband was getting at so I wouldreply absently, “This is not a front, this is who we are! If you’re going to live here for a year, you’d better get used to it!” Since being in America, I’m the one now who is asking the questions.

Every state I have traveled to I am impressed by the cleanliness and efficiency of how things work. On the other hand, nothing has shocked me more as seeing ghettos, projects, and people who are homeless. I ask myself, “What is this land of the free and home of the brave? Brave because the land was stolen from the Indians? Free because its economic foundation was built on the enslavement of my people? What is this place that claims justice and freedom? Is the war in Iraq justice? From what I’ve heard, was the 2000 election an example of America’s freedom?”

I’ve told my friends and family in Africa about the country I see, but they don’t understand. I can empathize with this. As an African who has grown up only with images of America on TV, myself and others have always thought of America as a country where everyone is wealthy, relaxed, tall, skinny, and beautiful. But since being here I see people working so hard to be wealthy, acting so fake to be liked, trying so hard to lose weight, and eating and spending so much to fill a void of guilt.

Kenyan are very proud of the African-American community they know about. We are proud of how far they have come in this country despite the odds. Unfortunately though, it seems that many blacks in this country are ignorant of their roots and even the young, “gangsta” attitude blacks are ashamed in being associated with Africa. This is quite the contrast when you see that young Kenyan men emulate the same “gangsta” image. But I think I can understand both sides.

The media in Kenya shows America as a promised land and the media in America shows Africa as the Dark Continent. Too many times I have seen homeless African children on TV in America and little about the daily living of most Africans. So many times on TV in America I have seen African disease, African poverty, and pot bellied starving African children. Yes, they are there and yes, all of this exists. I appreciate the media showing the suffering as this prompts able people to reach out and help. But I think the problem lies in the fact that if you’ve never lived in Africa for a significant period of time, then what you see on TV in America about Africa is how you form your opinions. This image is not the true colors of Africa at all and is a catapult for thoughts of racism, prejudice, and stereotypes.

Like what Jonah saw during his year and what so many others come back with when they live in Africa, we know the Africa that laughs so hard, the Africa that looks for any excuse to dance and celebrate so much despite the hardships we face. I know by name the beggars who live by my house and who live in the city. I’ve talked with them. I’ve cried with them. I’ve laughed with them and I’ve eaten with them. Do tourists know these people? Do the TV cameramen know the people beneath their image that is reflected in the lens? Do they even want to know them?

The media has been biased in portraying my continent as “the dark continent” and America as “the promised land.” Perhaps this is the kind of racism that still exists in this modern age. Perhaps this is the mistake that some people make when they think of Africa.

After you’ve had a meaningful encounter with another stranger or friend, in parts of my Mama Africa, there’s a phrase that is said that translates to the words “I see you.” This means that you see not only the visual appearance of a person, but more importantly, that you see the spirit and soul of a person. In short, you see their essence and not their class, skin, gender, or profession. You see the real person. And that real person that is seen is the person that I think people like Nelson Mandela see. They are the person that your mom, dad, brother or sister see in you. It is the people that Martin Luther King saw in the collective society of America.
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I would say, despite my complaints, that being in America is the best gift I’ve ever received because I get to live here with my husband, my best friend. But it’s also given me a new perspective on humanity. It’s told me that people are longing for understanding of each other, but that we’re doing it with very wrong mediums that are too quick to judge. Get to know your neighbor, whether if they live next door or across the oceans. Dare for intimacy. Dare to ask questions. Dare to know. Dare to help. Only then can we break the curse of superficial, busy quests for success. Then and only then will the days of wonder in the world that our ancestors lived in will let us see the world and each other as we are: our true self, and our true value as equal and precious living beings. It’s my job as part of this world ‘to see you.’ And I hope ‘you see me’ too.
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I’m locked up...

a book review: “police encounters: the black man’s guide to handling encounters with the police and protecting your constitutional rights”


review by: Tara Pringle

It doesn’t matter how you view the police force. You can see them as kind, friendly and always willing to help, or you can see them as a group of corrupt and racist people determined to keep you down. Whatever your views are, one thing that we all know is that the police have great power. They can arrest you, can take you to jail and basically strip you of the one thing we cherish most in this country: freedom.

There are a disproportionate number of Black men in jail. Black people only make up 12% of the population, so black men can’t be the ones committing all the crime. This only leads us to believe that many of our Black people are unfairly incarcerated.

Going to jail is not like a trip to “Club Fed.” It’s not glamorous and you don’t look “hard” because you’ve served time. For the few who make it out of the system, their future looks bleak. From then on out, whenever they fill out a job application or (in some states) when election time rolls around, they are reminded of the system that still has them in their grasp.

That is why it is important to know your rights and how to handle yourself whenever you do encounter the police. The book, “Police Encounters: The Black Man’s Guide to Handling Encounters with the Police and Protecting Your Constitutional Rights” strives to help with that task.

The authors, George W. Gordon and David Walker (both used pseudonyms), are currently incarcerated and wrote this book while serving their time. They wrote this book as a manual on police encounters to help others from being trapped in the same system in which they find themselves.

“We want our people out there to know and understand their rights in order to help prevent the injustices that happened to us from happening to them,” the authors said in a letter to the editor. “We were uncomfortable with the incredible disparity between the number of young Black and Hispanic males and females being exiled to prison compared to Whites who commit the most crime.”

The book attempts to cover all the bases, from what to do when you encounter police in your home, on the street, in a vehicle, in a public place. It has a special section just for juveniles and how the police view them.

The authors proceed step-by-step through the common situations we might find ourselves in, such as a traffic encounter. They always advise you to stay calm and give you tips on how to answer any questions the police might ask you.

The authors themselves make it clear that this book is NOT about hating white people. “It is about identifying and applying solutions to problems Black people face as a result of racist policies which are being carried out by certain Whites who have chosen, as a career, to use their government acquired authority to down-press Blacks,” they write.

In the appendix, there are sample arrest and search warrants, the Constitution, sample complaint letters and excerpts from the Dred Scott decision. At over 250 pages, it is worth the money.

For more information about purchasing this book or to speak with its authors, go to: www.kommoncents.com
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blowin’ up
The majority loves being rich. They are not going to give up what they stole (from the indigenous people and the rest of the world considering the national debt is $7,401,995,014,014,31). So why do we expect them to give us anything? These are the decedents of the liars and killers that are responsible for our condition today. And we’re supposed to trust them? It is time to stop asking and start taking. By taking I mean taking the knowledge to build. Somehow we have been brainwashed to think working for “the man” is a good job. A good job does not necessarily mean making the most money. Using our talents to benefit the majority will not help us as a people. All it does is help the few amount of sell-outs who don’t do a thing for the black community as a whole. I am not saying all rich black folks are sell-outs, but most of them are.

“**The strongest weapon known to mankind is the human mind...**”

waited too long for the promises that this country offers to whites and immigrants. What I am trying to say is it is time to stop asking and start building! This is not excluding any progressive group that wants to work with us. This is a call to the most oppressed, tied to group of people in American history.

African-Americans have been treated like a dog on a leash politically for long enough. Democrats try to pacify the black community with rations (welfare, vouchers, and other government subsidies), and the Republicans try to eliminate us (disproportionate jail populations, drug-infested neighborhoods, no health care, underfunded schools, and the list could go on). For far too long the African American community in this country has been treated like a situation instead of treating us like human beings. There have been plans to deal with “black folk” instead of just letting us live. Racism has its part in it, but just to excuse this atrocity by merely “the color of your skin” would be too easy. Racism goes deeper than that. Economics plays a major role in racism.

In this country we are separated into classes. Black people have been purposely held back to keep us in a dependent state. We were “fued” with no source of income, property, or inheritance, and in this “integrated” society (thanks to the failed civil rights movement of the 1960’s) we are forced to compete with an established economically powerful majority that provides no assistance, but put the blame on us because we are poor.

The majority loves being rich. They are not going to give up what they stole (from the indigenous people and the rest of the world considering the national debt is $7,401,995,014,014,31). So why do we expect them to give us anything? These are the decedents of the liars and killers that are responsible for our condition today. And we’re supposed to trust them? It is time to stop asking and start taking. By taking I mean taking the knowledge to build. Somehow we have been brainwashed to think working for “the man” is a good job. A good job does not necessarily mean making the most money. Using our talents to benefit the majority will not help us as a people. All it does is help the few amount of sell-outs who don’t do a thing for the black community as a whole. I am not saying all rich black folks are sell-outs, but most of them are.

by: Teddy Harris

It has been a long time coming, but change is going to come. People of African descent are spread all around the world, and for those in North America, it has been a long, hard 2004. I could write this article and talk all day about the institutionalized racism, gross capitalism, attacks on our human rights, and a plethora of social ills that plague our community. But at some point we as people of African descent must consider the options we have to improve our situations on this continent. For far too long we have pleaded for the government to do something about our problems. It is time for people of African descent to formulate our own agenda to care for our needs socially, economically, spiritually, and politically.

People of African descent that live in North America are commonly referred to as African-Americans. We were labeled that by the larger majority, and we accepted it. I will not get too far on that topic, but for the sake of this article, I will refer to us as African-Americans.

It has been said that you can not have a revolution without blood shed. Well, I am here to say that it is possible to have revolution without grabbing a gun. The strongest weapon known to mankind is the human mind. Think about it. You can kill the person but you can never kill the thought, idea, plan, movement, or a TRUE revolution. Black people in this country have
They believe that green money will make their black skin white. Several have tried; none have succeeded (O.J. Simpson, Michael Jackson, Tiger Woods, and Condoleezza Rice, just to name a few).

We must organize as a people to create a new mind state and personal identity. We have accepted the stereotypes that we have been labeled, and now for the most part have become complacent. We have to educate ourselves and our children with the truth. Learning European-American history will never help a black child. We must teach our children at a young age our true history. This will build a sense of pride in them for the rest of their lives. After all, the children are our future.

We have to stop spending so much money on useless materials. We don’t need 20-inch rims, overpriced shoes, expensive alcohol, or gaudy jewelry. Last year black people in the United States spent over $631 billion and less than 10% was put back into our community. That number makes us the 11th largest consumer... in the WORLD. Imagine if we invested that money in black owned stores, our own schools, and our own banks. I am not talking about segregation; I would let a person of any color work for me, buy my products, and invest in my businesses. I am talking about self-empowerment. I am talking about a national plan for real freedom. I am talking about a REVOLUTION.

We live in a time where jobs are being outsourced, and all people are being forced into a lower class economy. Meanwhile, the rich are getting stronger. Don’t you see? It is not about the color of our skin. They just want the black community poor, so they can be rich. By us not investing in our own, we are HELPING their plan. The evil rich right wing of government will force middle class black and white people into the poverty level. And that means trouble for my brothers and sisters. If the least wealthy whites lose control over the government our vote won’t matter to them. Rich whites will keep forcing them into lower economical classes forcing blacks and poor whites in a competition (sound reminiscent of the reconstruction period?). Then we’ll be looked at as just black people. Then things start getting ugly (fire
hoses, police brutality, KKK, and race motivated murders). Survival of the Fittest is the nature of this country. However, there is a way to combat this whole MESS.

The Democratic Party is nice to black people in this country. So vote for them. You don't have to trust them, but they make promises we can hold them accountable for and this will buy us time to build. We need to save our money, invest in our own businesses, and teach our children the truth. We need to make sure we keep an eye on the government, so we need senators, governors, and congressmen. We need our own banking system to help build wealth. A system that encourages investments in black-owned stock, mutual funds, and reputable education. We need farmers, doctors, and carpenters. This provides food, shelter, and good health. Our $631 billion could be invested in those ventures that would directly affect our well being. All of this could be controlled by our bank system. Eventually, we would create a functioning nation within a nation that could aid the rest of the African Diaspora. This is a national freedom plan.
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)
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13001 Foundations of Pan-African Studies I (03-03)
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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)
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23111 The African American Community (3)
24095 Black Writers Workshop (3)
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30010 African and African American Philosophies (3)
30120 Contemporary Issues in African-American Education (3)
31002 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)
33200 Ancient-African Cultures (3)
33203 Kiswahili Conversation (3)
33600 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)
37140 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)
43395 Special Topics in African Diaspora Studies (3)
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)
49095 Selected Topics (2-3)
49096 Individual Investigation (1-3)
We live in a society that rewards 

Editor’s Note: The following article appeared in the spring 2004 issue of uhuru. However, due to an error in the editing process, the article did not appear as the staff writer and the rest of the staff intended. Here is the original article by request of the staff writer. We sincerely apologize for the confusion.

The Struggle between Right and Wrong

Everyone has their own depiction of what absolute truth is. Some believe in oneness with self as absolute truth and others believe in Holy Scriptures. It does not matter what you believe in. We all have our personal ideas of what is inherently wrong our right. But what is right? What is wrong? Are the concepts of right and wrong absolute or do the definitions vary from culture to culture?

We all have a conscience, and we all have a feeling of what is right and what is not. What happens when all of the values that you thought you had are challenged? Why do we substitute wrong for right? What justifies a wrongful act? Every one of us has someone who teaches us what is right, and we choose to do wrong. Some of the things that we do as a people are so wrong they are stupid. Stupid is accepting ignorant ideas as truth, while knowing that they are ignorant.

We live in a society that rewards wrongful acts. Denzel Washington has publicly said that he would not want his children to see his movie Training Day, but that is the film that he won an Oscar for. We know what not to do but somehow some of us still end up in bad situations. For example, we all know that it is wrong to get involved with illegal narcotics, but some people still get involved with a lifestyle that does not lead to much success. Blacks are 13 times more likely than whites to be arrested and charged as drug offenders.

That number is staggering. An even more staggering fact is that whites are five times more likely to be users of narcotics while blacks are much more likely to be arrested for possession. If that does not sound like a trap I don’t know what else will convince you. It is perplexing to me that Blacks knowing these numbers still will decide to sell drugs. Black men make up a little over 50% of the jail population in Ohio, while blacks only make up 11% of the population in this state. Most of the brothas are going to jail on drug related crimes. Knowing all of this some brothas will still chose to sell drugs as a choice of employment being ignorant to the fact that it leads to one of two options: death or jail. In my opinion, the distribution of narcotics is one of the stupidest professions that a black man could take up. We must help our brothas and sistas find other alternative means of employment. We must help them find grants, loans, and scholarships to school. It is about searching out the means to distribute “right” options.

Another wrong action that I do not understand is why people choose to partake in is promiscuous sexual activity. Over 60% of all the new AIDS cases are in Black women. Blacks make up about 12.4% of the total population here in the United States, but over half of the persons contracting HIV are people of color. One-third of all of the AIDS infected people in this country are Black. AIDS is a disease that no one can beat. If you contract HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) then you are going to die. But again, blacks are being affected by this disease at record rates and we still hear stories of sexually promiscuous men and women within our community. We are the fastest group of people being affected with this atrocious disease. Statistics show that 1 in 3 college students are infected with an STD, but that does not stop the high rate of unprotected sex. Did you know that AIDS can remain dormant in your body for up to ten years without you knowing you have it? So you could have AIDS right now and not even know until it decides to show its ugly head a few years (and a few more partners) later. You can help put a stop to this mess by either STOP being sexually promiscuous or START wearing a condom. This is an easy solution to a growing problem that will hit home for a lot of Black families this year. The truth is here; we just have to accept it. Just be smart, and think about the consequences of your actions before you do them.

I was at a party late last year and I happened to notice a fight. The men were punching,
I was wondering in my mind what could make these two black men hate each other so passionately that they were willing to go to jail and be charged for disorderly conduct. I found out later that they were fighting over a woman. What made it worse was that the woman that they were fighting over did not like either of them. That is just stupid. They could have both just tried to talk to another woman at the party, but they both had something to prove. I have had associates tell me that they gotten into fights because, “The nigga was testin’ me”. Everyone knows what is right and wrong, and no matter what way you twist it, that is the wrong reason to fight anyone. It takes a bigger man to walk away than to carry on the black on black violence that plagues our people.

I wonder what would happen if black people took all of the energy they had to hate each other, and put it to cooperative use to fight the powers that keep them in low income housing, sub-par educational systems, and drugs in our communities like crack cocaine. I wonder if all the money used to house 1 out every 20 black men in prison went to their college education. After they successfully finished college, what if they made contributions to black politicians that represented them, or if they ran for public office themselves? What would our black communities be like if instead of seeing how many women they could sleep with, men would see what kind of good fathers and husbands they could be? If more brothas and sistas stayed monogamous, I am sure that the number of students that have sexually transmitted diseases would drop. It is all about being smart. If we decided to change the way we think, we could probably make a drastic change in the way this country views Black people.

According to the latest U.S. census, this country is made up of 12.4% African Americans and 12.5% Hispanics. I believe due to the similarities of each group, we could unite an interest in domestic and political affairs that has the potential to reshape the laws we live under. Blacks and Latinos could come together and create a powerful voting block, economic powers, successful media conglomerates, corporate giants, and create a new way that America must do business with a respectable, ethnic economical machine. Throw some progressive whites in the mix and we will start a whole new political party, ready to battle the Democrats and Republicans for political control of this country all the while representing the interest of the working class, minorities, and the progressive thinkers. By choosing to do the RIGHT thing over the tempting WRONG could free Black America up to think about improving our conditions in this country on every level including: educational, economical, domestic, health, and political.

If we all agree that infidelity, selling drugs, disrespecting women, black on black crime, and having an all around negative attitude is wrong, then why do we glorify it? Why do we continuously try and act like rappers, ball players, and other rebellious media icons are not role models? If you are in the public light people look up to you! Do you really think the club or a party would be the same if the lights were on? As we get older and wiser, we should realize that doing the smart thing is not necessarily the cool thing.

When Africans were brought over here to become slaves so long ago, we tend to forget that they had their own way of thinking, living, and ways of raising families. Over four hundred years later, we are the decedents of the great men and women forced into slavery. We have evolved into a group of people who don’t realize the power potential that we possess. We spend upwards of about $600 billion on frivolous items, while recycling less than 10% within the Black community. We can start businesses and invest in our children to guarantee a strong financial future for Black America. Black America needs a national plan, to create economic wealth and competitiveness. If not, we will forever be asking the majority for tax cuts, reparations, civil rights, and other things we can get ourselves. The first step in creating a new way of thinking is to stop engaging in activities that are anti-black empowerment movement. Things like continuous sexual promiscuity, distribution and consumption of illegal narcotics, and black on black violence just to name a few. If we just think about the long term for our people we can reshape the way the world depicts us.
the beginning of the end
the following people have started over:

Tara Pringle, general manager, editor
Marisia Styles, managing editor
Brandon Isabell, copy editor
Noella Callahan, business manager
Adria Barbour, staff writer
Jacala Barnett, staff writer
Crystal Huggins, staff writer
Teddy Harris, staff writer
Erika Meyers, staff writer
Autumn Ritchie, staff writer
Gathinja Yamokoski, staff writer
Jonah Yamokoski, staff writer
Tara Pringle, staff writer
Jerry Jezek, art director
Elizabeth Ferraro, photographer
Ryan Blackwell, photographer
Kristin Travis, graphic designer
Margo Phillips, ad designer
E. Timothy Moore, uhuru advisor
Mike Magnes, ad sales
everybody move
so you say you want a revolution?
the time has come:
to stop watching and start living
to stop rapping and start growing
to stop selling-out and start buying-in
this is the starting point, the launch pad, the jump-off
this is the end of our new beginning, but let us hurry:
we are running out of
uhuru means: