



# the ONYX

*the Berea College  
Black Cultural Center Student Newsletter*

## Home sweet home *staff assistant takes up residence at BCC*

From Staff Reports

Marilee Shanor is the new staff assistant of the Black Cultural and International Centers. She resides in the reception area of the Woods-Penniman building.

Marilee and her family moved from Portland, Oregon to Berea in June to start a Foursquare Church. Marilee's main objective in choosing this job was to embrace diversity and have a chance to get to know as many students as possible.

Working for the Black Cultural and International Centers certainly fills that desire. "I feel that throughout my working career so far, the best parts have been meeting people and helping them to reach their full potential. If I can help, that's what I want to do."

Marilee thinks that the BCC will become more of a resource area as students get to know



**Black Cultural Center staff hard at work in their new home in Woods-Penniman.**

about it and realize it is there for them. It has been designed so that students passing

through can drop by, say hi, ask for help, read a magazine or find resources.

the ONYX

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# Cultural Diversity in a broader context

By Virgil Burnside

In reading the Spring 1999 issue of *The Onyx*, I was struck by the question asked in the writing from the Director's Corner, "Where do we go from here?" This is one of the important questions which this community has struggled to answer and continues to do so.

However, as I routinely walk through the Crossroads Complex and cast my eyes upon the circle in the center of these three buildings, I marvel at the words "God hath made of one blood all people of the earth." These words reflect the vision of the early founders of Berea College and was the spirit that gave life to this institution. This vision is just as significant and relevant today and in my mind raises another important question.

"Where are we in our understanding, recognition and involvement with people who are different from ourselves?" I firmly believe this to be one of the more important questions as we move into the 21st Century. Let's not forget, America continues to be a mosaic of cultures. Still, as the world



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facing page

# Relationships 101

By Felicia Swinney

*What is the definition of a relationship? How do you know when you are in love? What is love?*

## LESSON #1

On November 17, sixteen students gathered to take their First Lesson: Relationships 101. Seven males and nine females discussed their ideas about what makes a relationship meaningful, productive, and most



Students participate in a lively discussion on love, relationships, and sexuality.

importantly, *real*. From the definition of love to the touchy subject of sex, students voiced their opinions, listened, and learned. For example, some men felt that in a relationship women should share the cost of dates and in other activities. However, a few women disagreed supporting the idea that men should pay for the majority of the dates. Students also discussed the issue of sex in a relationship. Questions ranged from when should you begin having sex, can you put a time limit on when to have sex, and should you even have sex. In the

end, it was concluded that a good relationship is better when two people begin as friends, accept each other's differences, and practice honesty and trust.

So, what is the definition of *relationship*? "A connection where two people experience life together."

How do you know when you are in *love*? "You don't. Love is something that comes in time."

What is *love*? "Look inside your heart for the answer."

# We have a Winner!

## COPASETIC: LOVE JONES NITE!!

*The lights were dim, fingers were snapping, John Coltrane lingering in the air, words flowing through hearts, it was truly copasetic...*

She is my all  
My everything  
My reason for living  
The song that I sing  
However,  
When she is not around  
I long for Her  
No I said it right  
I long for her  
Not she  
Not my all  
My everything but for Her  
Her the one who makes the ...  
Well you know  
While she is going to work  
I sit and think about Her and all the adventures we have  
Her smile  
Her walk  
Her movements  
The things Her says can bring the

strongest man to his knees  
The things Her says can make a priest confess  
The things Her says can make... well you know  
Her  
Her  
Her  
Her can make a child leave his mother  
Or Her can make a child leave his other  
But I must stay strong for if She ever finds out about Her...  
Well you know  
But if she does find out  
"Why are you always sleeping?"  
"Why are you always rushing to go to bed?"  
"Why do u spend

every minute dreaming?"  
"Why do I sleep?"  
"Dream?"  
"Why?"  
because Her does not nag  
Her does not ask where were you last night!  
Her is always in the mood  
Her always comforts her man  
Her never...Never... well you know  
Her is real  
Her is the truth  
However, Her is no more than a dream one with no proof so I must hold on to She until I find Her

—Terence Surles  
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# Walking in the Light

## Black Music Ensemble stages annual concert

By Waahida Tolbert

On Saturday, November 20, anticipation was eagerly arising, because once again, that time of the year had arrived. No, not Thanksgiving, but none other than the annual Berea College Black Music Ensemble Homecoming Concert. Several hundred students (as well as alumni, faculty and parents) filled Union Church to hear the choir perform under the direction of Dr. Kathy Bullock. The theme for this year's concert was "Walking in the Light" and the lights of each choir member were genuinely reflective in their energy and love for the music as they performed.

When Dedrick Wilson sang "No weapon formed against me shall prosper", it was nearly impossible for most to remain seated. The entire audience was enticed by the message and song selections. Not only did the ensemble perform traditional gospel selections, but they also performed an African spiritual, *Ose Baba*, led by Laticia Taylor, with spiritual dance movements by the Berea College African Dancers.

The choir, which is composed of 60-plus voices, lifted the name of God. They continue to let everyone know that they refuse to give up, even when faced with trials, tribulations and boundaries that are seemingly impossible to overcome. The Black Music Ensemble is "pressing its weight" and refuses to "turn around".

The ensemble concluded their concert with the theme song *Walking in the Light*. If you missed this concert, you missed out on a blessing.

HAVING  
MY SAY

Continued from  
facing page



continues toward a global community, we will continue to be challenged to create and recreate our own cultural images. And yes, we will continue to struggle with the inequities and powerlessness imposed upon us (and other minorities) by America's dominant culture.

However, if we come to see this country and world in a broader context, we readily recognize that we, African Americans are one of many minority groups. Likewise, if we are to continue to prosper as a people, we must avoid any appearance of isolationism and expand our own thinking about issues of diversity. Therefore, I challenge each of us to make good use of the opportunities this college offers in learning about other cultures. On campus opportunities to learn and understand others are plentiful. Also, off camp learning opportunities are prevalent in the Study Aboard Program. Despite the fact that we may be strangers to one another — we occupy a common space and must learn to live together. The vision of this institution calls us to recognize our oneness and our interdependence upon one another regardless of our differences.

*Virgil Burnside is the Assistant to the Vice-President for Labor and Student Life*

# Senior Spotlight

By Chinwe Kpaduwa

**Nasiha Gresham** is a 22-year-old, senior English Major from Alabama, by way of Atlanta. She currently works in the Education department, and she is also a media teaching assistant. In the future, Nasiha would like to own a television company. With great enthusiasm, she says "I'll be the next Ted Turner or Oprah, but bigger and better!" After graduation from Berea she plans to get an M.B.A. and a Ph.D. in Education. Nasiha believes in volunteering her time to different clubs and organizations on campus, such as the Black Student Union and Black Cultural Center "it is imperative to volunteer," she says. Her past labor assignments have been as a monitor and resident assistant.



Gresham



Melton

These positions contributed to her personal growth with her peers and school authority. In her own words,

"Berea has prepared me beyond the academic level."

She leaves us with words of encouragement, "stick it out, it's worth it. It builds character."

**Antonio Melton** is a 24-year-old, senior Education Major from Birmingham, Alabama. It would seem that all the stars come from Alabama after reading this spotlight. "Tony" as he is fondly called, is currently a student teacher at Burbon County middle school, and a tutor and counselor for Upward bound here at Berea. He plans to get a Master's in counseling after Berea College.

"It is true when they say that you do not appreciate what you have until you no longer have it," says Antonio while reflecting on his experiences at Berea. Although he remembers complaining endlessly while he was on campus, Antonio is very proud to say he received his college education at Berea. "I am happy I made it...four and half years, and I am leaving home". Tony is also proud to say he met his future wife here: Cindy Hsieh, as he gives her a bear hug.

# A Walk on the *the Black Student Union Pageant*

By Jarel Jackson

The 1999-2000 Black Student Union (BSU) Pageant was a complete success. BSU is ready to guide Berea College into the new millennium. The theme was *A Walk on the Nile*, and what a walk it was. It began with the singing of the Black National Anthem by Carrie Stuart and Erica Peterson. The stars that guided the audience through the night were

**See related article written by the winner herself on facing page**

Chris Hawkins and yours truly.

The contestants, also known as jewels, graced the audience in casual, professional, and formal attire. As the master of ceremonies, I could feel the intensity on the stage as the jewels were working hard at becoming the BSU Queen.

Maurice Chamblin sang a gospel song as a living testimony of his very recent car accident and as an inspiration to the contestants. Keith Bullock, BSU advisor, sang a heart felt love song to his wife, Dr. Kathy Bullock, as she accompanied him on the piano. I am sure he brought tears to the audience, who may have experienced that same soft touch of

joy from a companion.

During the interview session, the jewels had a chance to answer a question in which they were judged on clarity and eloquence. Dr. Cleo Charles expressed his views of love, concern, joy, and happiness about his relationship with BSU. Dr. Charles has been a major reason why the black community at Berea College has prospered. Tomaze Adams and Chassidy Draper were the little King and Queen, and were escorted by the 1998-99 runners-up, Jason Oden and Syreeta Pratt. Then, we were graced by the entrance of 1998-99 King and



## Beautiful jewels all in a row

Other Black Student Union Pageant contestants were (left to right): Keyata Jones, Brandi Nwagbara, Kristine Maguire, Keisha Morgan and Freda Johnson. Not shown: Gabriella McWhorter.

Pageant winner LaShaundra Marie Thedford



# Nile

## geant

Queen, Cornelius Butler and Felicia Swinney. The moment arrived: the awards ceremony. Miss Congeniality was awarded to Freda Marie Johnson from Nashville, Tennessee. The 1999 Queen of the Black Student Union Scholarship Pageant was LaShaundra Marie Thedford from Birmingham, Alabama.

Tifanie McMillan, the coordinator of the pageant, closed the ceremonies. I personally want to thank Tifanie for a wonderful job. Students and faculty are still talking about the pageant.

Hard work and effort finally paid off. Everyone worked extremely hard and now we must program our minds and hearts for next year's Black Student Union Pageant. Hail to the Queen!



### Hail to the Queen!

Crowning the new Queen, LaShaundra Thedford, are Syreeta Pratt (1998-99 first runner-up, left) and Felicia Swinney (1998-99 Queen, right).



### Time of my life!

Shaun Thedford looks as if she's having the time of her life as she becomes the new BSU Queen for 1999-00. She relates the experience in her own words below.

## “Unforgettable” Queen's story in her own words

By Shaun Thedford

My experience in the BSU pageant is one that I shall never forget. In fact, I hold it near and dear to my heart. It's not just because I hold the title Miss Black Student Union Queen 1999-2000, but for many other reasons. For example, the time spent practicing, the people I had the opportunity to work with, and my first experience with a black organization as a freshman at Berea, have made a positive impact on my life. I am filled with wonderful memories and knowledge.

I must admit, at first I was a little hesitant about being in the pageant because of what Tifanie McMillan appeared to be demanding from the contestants. However, reason kicked in and reminded me that it is better to work with someone who wants “the best” instead of “what will do.” Besides, nothing good happens without a little hard work. Yet, after the first practice I was comforted by the laughter of Tifanie, Syreeta, Waahida, and my fellow contestants. The practices were a learning experience. We worked on our postures and walking skills, which are always a little bit tedious because I am a slouch by nature. But, everybody made it fun.

For two months, I had the pleasure of being surrounded by a group of lovely women. As we prepared for the pageant, I don't recall a single moment of tension amongst the contestants. There was never an instant of confrontation or an act of jealousy. From the first day to the ending reception, everyone was always very supportive. There was only one situation that I regret: Gabriella became sick and had to leave, not only the pageant, but Berea College.

It was only seven of us, but we were all fairly close. If someone was missing, we noticed. Everyone's personality contributed to the rehearsal ambiance. I will always be thankful for Tifanie's professional attitude, Brandi's sassy humor, Keyata's soothing psychiatrist voice and beautiful smile, Chris's expressions right before she always had to walk, Keisha's navy blue socks, Gabby's style, Freda's sarcasm and smile, and the running scenes at the mall and ECU. For all of this and more, thank you!

# Dining Etiquette Table Manners Matter!

By Ken Knight

On November 8, 1999 I had the pleasure of being a guest of the BCC for the etiquette dinner hosted by Ms. Mary Lamb. I acquired a tremendous amount of knowledge on what is and is not considered appropriate dining behavior.

I also learned which eating utensils to use for each portion of the meal, the proper way to dismiss myself from the dinner table, and what type of gift to take the host when invited to dinner.

I also realized the importance of good etiquette in the business world. In today's society, businesses expect future employees to be efficient in every aspect, even at the dinner table.

Furthermore, I received insights on dining attire, table conversations, menu selections, and cultural traditions.

For example, Ms. Lamb recommended that proper business attire be worn unless told otherwise. Also, conversations while dining should not be political and mainly small talk about the weather or something of that nature. Ms. Lamb gave some other helpful suggestions: never ask the host for a "doggie" bag; do not order barbecue; stay away from spaghetti when dining; do not go to the restroom in pairs; and always send a thank you card or flowers to the host.

Overall, the evening was a delicious success!

# The Community Social

*Fun, relaxation and  
words of wisdom make  
event a success*

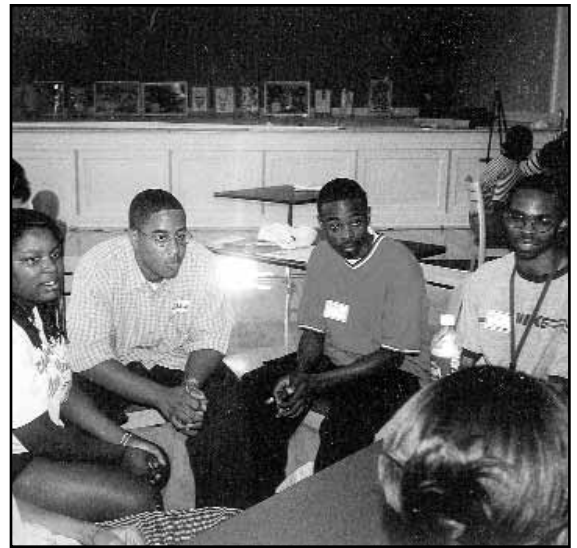
By DaShaunda Turner

The Community Social, sponsored by the Black Cultural Center, was designed to welcome new African and African American students to Berea. The purpose of the program was to create an environment in which students could relax while getting acquainted with fellow classmates, faculty and staff at Berea College, as well as community members.

President Larry Shinn welcomed the students and expressed the richness that African American students bring to Berea. The presidents of the Student Government Association, Maurice Chamblin, and the Black Student Union, Charlie Shavers, shared words of wisdom and encouragement to these new students, who looked slightly weary after a long day of orientation.

There were several fun activities provided to help students get more acquainted, comfortable and rejuvenated about the year ahead: ice breakers, door prizes, games, student reflections of their high school experiences and expectations of Berea College.

I think this is a very important event for new African and African American students because it allows them to relax, socialize, ask questions, and gain insights into the services, programs, and opportunities provided for them.



Students taking part in a group discussion at the Community Social.

## News Bites

### **Congratulations are in order!**

The BCC would like to congratulate the following African American students on their victories in the recent SGA elections:

Freshman President: **Khalif Morris**  
Freshman Vice-President: **Ryan Riley**

Congratulations to the African and African American students who made this year's homecoming court:

**Maurice Chamblin, Romeatrius Crutcher, Felicia Swinney, Suleiman Oko-Ogua, Syreeta Pratt, and Sonja Williams**

Special congratulations to **Maurice Chamblin** and **Felicia Swinney** on becoming the new Homecoming King and Queen.

Congratulations to **LaShaundra Thedford**, BSU Queen 1999-2000, **Brandi Nwagbara**, First Runner Up and **Freda Johnson**, Miss Congeniality.

### **December Graduates**

The BCC would like to congratulate all

African and African American December graduates. We wish you success.

### **Peer Counselors**

The Peer Counselors assist African and African American students in making a smooth transition from high school to college. Please take advantage of the services and programs offered by these students.

### **Waahida Tolbert** and **Akili Ujima**

Tutorial for Basic Math and CEC, study skills, time management

**Felicia Swinney** Health and Wellness

**Sonja Williams** Service Learning

**Romeatrius Crutcher** Career Development

### **Wedding Bliss**

Congratulations to newlyweds Kenneth & Tonya Reese and James & Audrey Peters. We wish you many years of happiness.

# A little culture

## *Annual event a celebration of many faces, many colors*

By LaVon Rice

The annual African Culture Show, sponsored and produced by the African Students Association (ASA) was held Saturday, November 13, at 7 p.m. in the Gray Auditorium. "Africa: A Celebration of Many Cultures" was the theme for this year's culture show, yet with the inclusion of primarily international students from Lindsey Wilson College and Kentucky State University, it was also a celebration of many faces, many colors.

After Sam Asem's libation and welcome, eight female dancers—Chinwe Kpaduwa, Kader Traore, Martine Dumas, Latonya Davis, Romeatrius Crutcher, Kiki Anderson, Kekeli Ekoue, and Felicia Outsey—came onstage in vivid hue and in a vibrant dance called "Atilogu." It was joy in skill that we watched, and it was with joy, skill, and beauty that they danced—with the tightness of technique, the precision of the pelvis, the rise and roll of the hips.

Adding spoken word as yet another cultural expression of black people, Carlos Foster followed the dancers with an original poem. His poetry reminded us that the dance of words is African, continuing the oral tradition of the griot.

The ensuing fashion show featured African fashions, from informal to formal wear. The masters of ceremony were Annette Thompson and Felemon Belay, who placed the clothing in context, explaining its history and practical use. The fashion show, displayed by African and African-American students, was a parade of color.

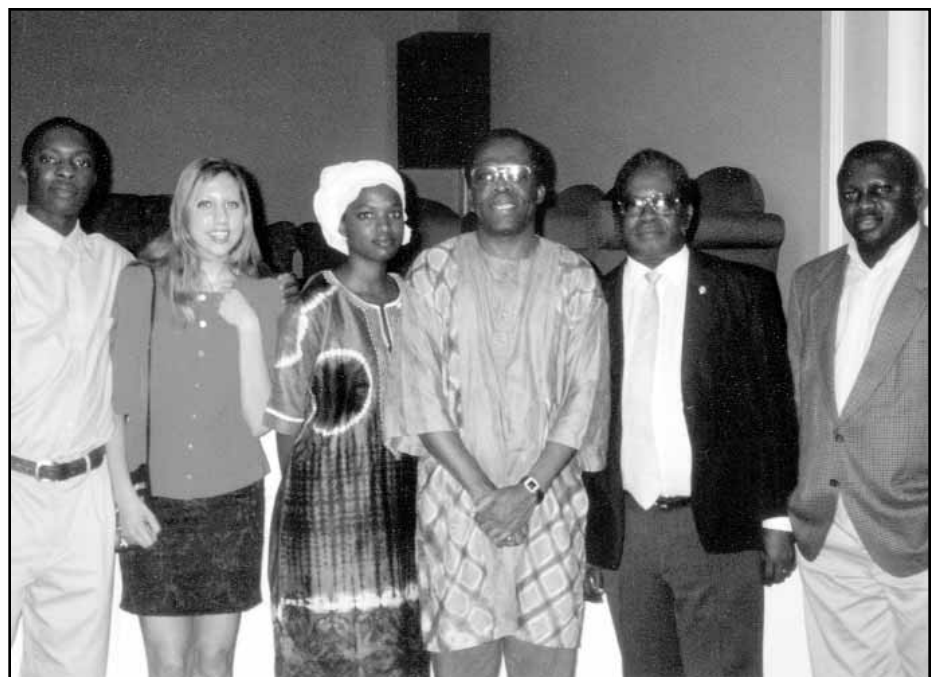
After these performances and presentations by Berea College students, Lisa Marie Fillas of Kentucky State University recited "I'm Proud to be Black." "Reciting" would not be quite accurate; Fillas

presented the poem with the same power of wind and hurricane native to Haiti—her own homeland and the country from which the poem sprang. Its power was evident even in a foreign language, as Fillas read fiercely in French, followed by a translation in English. But a translation was hardly necessary, as we got her meaning: it is a proud thing to be black.

Berea College returned to stage with an Ethiopian dance. The subtle shaking and isolating of shoulders is a particular East African contribution to African dance as a whole. It shows us that dance happens all over the body of the continent; it makes clear Africa is not a monolithic continent, but comprised of many cultures and colors.

After an intermission, Lindsey Wilson College came to stage to show its skill. Three men casually dressed in white shirts and blue jeans

also casually danced a Zairean dance. Afterwards, Domingo Perez of Kentucky State University read a poem, recalling the beauty and memory of Puerto Rico—a country with its own celebration of Indian, Spanish, and African cultures. Continuing the diversity, Kentucky State University "showed out" on stage with a reggae dance, performed by students of different nationalities. KSU's fashion show not only portrayed African fashions, particularly the regalia of Nigerian wear, but Latin American attire as well. The question "Mother Africa: Where is Thy Glory," a poem dramatically presented and written by Sam Asem, was answered in the last performance, a Caribbean dance. This dance included a dancer from "Atilogu"—Chinwe Kpaduwa—and introduced others—Annette Thompson, Aziza Madjani, Beatrice Nokuri, Michael Samuel, Omar Rasoul, Paul Kiptoo, and Victor Hlaisi. Mother Africa, where is your glory? In Africa, as well as in the Africa diaspora, of which the Caribbean is a part. The glory was apparent in the Caribbean dance, as well the entire show—a celebration of many cultures, all children of Mother Africa.



**Students and invited guests at the ASA banquet.**

# Our Mission



The Black Cultural Center was established in 1983 on the premise that true integration and equality cannot be achieved without a general awareness and understanding of the black culture.

The mission of the Black Cultural Center is to:

- assist Berea College in creating an environment that acknowledges, respects, and enhances diversity;
- assist in increasing the enrollment, retention, and attrition rates of African American students at Berea College;
- provide support services for African American students to assist them in achieving their highest educational potential and to meet challenges of a multicultural society;
- assist Berea college in their efforts to recruit and retain African American faculty and staff;
- work closely with African American faculty and staff;
- and establish working relationships with African American communities throughout the state of Kentucky.

# Kayaga thrills Berea students

## *Performers tell story of Africa with dance, song and words*

By Suleiman Oko-Ogua

On September 16, the Kayaga of Africa, featuring Namu Lwanga visited the college campus. The venue of this convocation was the Seabury Upper Gymnasium. The convocation was well attended by faculty, staff, students and members of Berea Community. The Kayaga of Africa combines stories, songs, and dances to portray traditional and modern day life from east and central Africa. Her stories reminded me of some of my first experiences in the United States; culture shock and adaptation to a new environment.

The performances embraced dances from Rwanda, Central Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Nile area in Egypt, Kenya and so on. Aspects portrayed by the dances include royal ceremonies, marriage ceremonies, waist dances, leg rattles and finally, modern day dances. The most important issues pointed out by Kayaga through her performances were the diversity and rich

cultural heritage of Africa. These are two areas of which many people are ignorant. You never know how diverse mother Africa is, until you visit the continent. Kayaga also talked about her first experiences of an African in the United States.

Kayaga of Africa's performances have taken them to many states in the United States, and also other countries. Some of these places within the United States include the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C, Annenberg Center in Pennsylvania, Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York, Boise State University in Idaho, Woolly Mammoth Theater in Washington D.C, Olney Theater in Maryland, the National Black Arts Festival as well as many others. They have also performed in India, China, Canada, Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom. The Kayaga group has been described by critics and audiences as "colorful", "energetic", and "powerful".

## *Ancestor* **Highlight** .....

**DR. RALPH  
BUNCHE  
born 1904**

In 1950, Dr. Ralph Bunche received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in settling a dispute in the Near East. A scholar, government official and a member of the United Nations staff, Dr. Bunche has worked to make this world a better place in which to live for people of all races and nationalities.

He grew up in poverty, shining shoes and selling papers to help his family. Ralph Bunche was the valedictorian of his Jefferson High School class, Los Angeles. While working as a janitor, he was graduated with highest honors from the University of California. He earned a Ph.D. degree from Harvard University.

Dr. Bunche was chairman of the Political Science Department of Harvard University when called to work in the State Department in 1944. Since 1946 he has served the United Nations in many different roles.

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