

# The OnlyX

Volume 4 Number 2

Fall 2002

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**Poetry, News  
and more!**



## Focus on RELATIONSHIPS

How you interact with your professors and loved ones can have a tremendous impact on your success.

# The ONYX

Volume 4 Number 2  
Fall 2002

A Student Publication of the  
Black Cultural Center

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## DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY

# Community and the African Diaspora

*African-Americans should realize they are a part of a much larger world-wide "community"*



**PAULA  
McGHEE**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

I love variety! There is nothing better than a dabble of this and a drop of that to change a standard way of doing things. As with almost every aspect of American life, African-American communities are characterized by their astounding variety. Black communities throughout America include people who are educated and ignorant, saint and sinner, "red-bone" and "blue-black," rich and poor. Still, African-Americans share the commonality of an African heritage; a connection with the "motherland" that only black people understand. Whether dancing in the streets of Rio de Janeiro or New Orleans, persons throughout the African Diaspora experience a cultural connection with the "homeland" that resonates through the very fiber of one's being.

When asked to develop a focal point and theme for the Black Cultural Center, I decided to center upon the need to internationalize the African-American perspective. Since September 11, 2001, all Americans have come to realize that we do not exist within a vacuum. It's a big world out there and we are only one part of it, and not necessarily the center of everyone's universe. Therefore, as Americans of African descent we must be cognizant of the situations affecting those of African descent throughout the world. Every human society is made up of communities. A community is a set of relationships that link men, women, and their families into a coherent social whole, more than the sum of its parts. In a community people develop the capacity for unified action. In a community they learn, often through trial and error, how to adapt to their environment. The sentiment that binds the members of a community together is the origin of group



# Islam in a nutshell

*Though recent events have made more people aware of the religion, many do not realize it shares many similarities with modern Christianity*

By **RASHAAD ABDUR-RAHMAN**

Islam is based on five pillars of faith. These pillars are as follows: prayer, hajj, fasting, belief in one God, and charity. Well start with **prayer**.

Every Muslim is supposed to pray 5 times a day. This isn't just some random thing, there is a purpose behind it that I think you will see makes sense. When an individual is praying constantly, that individual is constantly in contact with God, encouraging that individual to stray from sin. Think about it, if someone prays 5 times in one day, they probably wont succumb to a lot of sin. Praying constantly keeps God in your mind and helps you stay on what we call "The straight path." It doesn't take more than a few minutes to complete one prayer so it isn't as time consuming as you may think. Basically, the more you pray, the more you think of God, the more you stay away from the uglier things in life.

**Hajj**, which is Arabic for "a journey", is a trip that every Muslim must make at least once in their lifetime. Basically, it's a religious trip that visits holy places in Mecca and Medina. What's so special about these places? Well, these two places are crucial in Islamic the history. They are the birth grounds of the religion and its prophet who originally spread the word of Islam, Muhammad. Muhammad was an orphan who had the word of God revealed to him through the angel Gabriel, thus becoming a prophet. However, he was only a mortal man and a messenger of God, nothing more.

**Fasting** is something that many religions do, as you know, and Muslims do it as well. Muslims fast a wee bit longer than others do, one whole month. There are many purposes behind fasting. The most basic one being that Ramadan is the month that the holy book, the Quran, was revealed. You sacrifice eating from sunrise to sunset, to show your gratitude. Fasting is also an act of self-control, there isn't a method of dieting that's better, and it is one of the most spiritual experiences any individual may experience in their lifetime.

**Charity** is always honorable but what does it have to do with Islam? Well, material gain has always been one of the great corrupters for mankind and human civilization. Generosity is a value that separates the greedy from the selfless, and the good from the bad. The act of giving, if done consistently and for the right reasons, keeps the heart pure and in the right place.

**Belief in one God** is a theme that is constant in Islam and Christianity. I think it's fairly self-explanatory. We believe that there is one God and that he runs the show. The Arabic word for god is "Allah" so many Muslims refer to him as such. You may notice a Muslim refer to God as him or he. That's doesn't mean that we think God has any human or mortal qualities whatsoever, there is simply a lack of a better way to refer to God in those situations. God is all-powerful, sees all, knows all, omnipotent, and is...well...God.

*Rashaad Abdur-Rahman is a senior at Berea College.*

# Black Student Union



Rock the Chapel. Soul Food Dinner.  
 General Assemblies. Brotha/Sistah Day.  
 BSU Pageant.

As you can see, the Black Student Union is busy this year, making sure that not only black students, but *all* students have something to look forward to. This is my first year as an active member of the BSU. The Executive Council of the organization have been working diligently to provide many enriching programs and opportunities for students. To all members: Get involved, participate in the many activities that are planned. To non-members: you are welcome in the BSU and please don't be apprehensive about being included. To the Executive Council: I extend much appreciation and kudos; you all are doing a good job. Keep up the good work! To Cameron: keep your head up and shake dem' haters off!

—Faith L. Calhoun

## Black Student Union Executive Council 2002-2003

Title	Name
President	Cameron Shaw
Vice President	Leah Johnson
Secretary	DeJuana Thompson
Business Manager	Al Toe
Public Relations	Nisha Dorsey
Chaplain	Renee Sloan
Chaplain	Ronnie Farmer
Chaplain	Brandon Daniels
Pageant Coordinator	LaShaundra Thedford
Pageant Coordinator	Gabrielle McWhorter
Historian	Moriah Washington
Recruiting Chair	Hussene Youssouf
Faculty Advisor	Paula McGhee

## Fall 2002 Calendar

A listing of all of the BSU-sponsored events of this semester

### October 18th

BSU General Assembly Meeting  
 "Time Management & Academic Success" w/ Ms. Robin Whitmore, Dana Hall & BSU Pajama Jam

### October 20th

Rock the Chapel/Soul Food Dinner  
 BME Gospel Fest

### November 1st

BSU General Assembly Meeting

### November 15th

BSU General Assembly Meeting

### November 22nd

BSU *Essence of Ebony* Scholarship Pageant

### December 5th

Brotha Day and Sistah Day

# The Semester *in pictures*



- A** Nothin' Nice Convocation
- B** Community Social 2002
- C** Freshman Summit
- D** One Race, One People, One Peace convocation
- E** Trick or Treat for UNICEF
- F** Angela Davis convocation
- G** 2002 Roots and Heritage Festival

## ■ TEACHER AND STUDENT

### Good Student-Faculty Relationships

By **LAURA A. CRAWFORD**

Another school year begins and everyone is trying to figure the best way to do well in courses. Although there are many things that enter into successful experiences in any course, one important factor is developing good student-faculty relationships. After counseling several students and faculty members, the following comments were developed to explore what contributes to developing good relationships.

Students and faculty members identified mutual respect as the first requirement in developing effective and satisfying relationships. With respect and working together comes the development of trust – trust the next requirement. As students and faculty members work together and the integrity of the teaching-learning process is facilitated, students develop trust in faculty members to be genuinely concerned about them as individuals and committed to helping them achieve educational goals. Faculty members develop trust in the students that they are at Berea College for the right reason – to learn. Through this process, a “connection” is made between students and faculty members that have tremendous impact on the success of the educational experiences. An appropriate sense of humor is greatly appreciated by students and faculty members and makes it easier for good working relationships to develop.

Students identified the following things as being very important. They asked that faculty members:

- ✓ Listen carefully to students and be open to new ideas,
- ✓ Create an atmosphere of intellectual community and shared purpose,
- ✓ Have high standards and work with students to help them achieve those standards,

- ✓ Be enthusiastic about the things they are teaching, and
- ✓ Value the diversity of concerns, interests, and experiences that students bring to our campus.

Faculty members identified several things they would like to see students do. They asked that students:

- ✓ Come to class prepared and expecting to learn,
- ✓ Be interested in exploring new ideas,
- ✓ Be respectful when hearing varying perspectives, even those with which they disagree,
- ✓ Ask for assistance and guidance when needed, and
- ✓ Expect to work hard to achieve high academic standards.

To be most effective, administrators, faculty members, staff, and students must work together on our campus to foster the pursuit of academic excellence with a sense of individuals and collective responsibility for our learning environment. **We** are responsible for creating an environment that facilitates learning. This requires that we focus on strengths and abilities, not problems or deficits, as we develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of successful graduates of the new century.

Students and faculty members need to take the time and make the effort to know on another. The opportunity to develop wonderful life-long friendships is there. Berea College has chosen to remain a small residential college where strong student-faculty relationships help to achieve the educational goals. Take advantage of this opportunity within the next few weeks. Students get to know your faculty members! Faculty, get to know your students!

*Laura A. Crawford is an associate professor in Nursing at Berea College.*



# FOCUS RELATIONSHIP

We all have many different views on some of our daily lives, not just the same views on some

## ■ STUDENT AND TEACHER

### The Key Ingredient in Communication

By **SARAH POOLE**

The key ingredient in any communication. How can someone who doesn't understand something if you don't understand something if you don't understand something? Students have a fear that may creep into their mind right before approaching a teacher. If you have a question, ask. The professor wants to help you understand the material. That is his or her job.

Seeking the teacher for understanding is not an intimidating experience. Instead, it lets the teacher that you are interested in the class as well as your grade in the class. In the end, the teacher will receive an impression. By your performance, your boldness in approaching the teacher might assume that you are a hard-working student that is going the extra mile to obtain the grade needed. Furthermore, you will have an awareness of the motives of the teacher. They are not here to make you fail. They will succeed just as you much as you

# EVERY DAY IS ON RELATIONSHIPS

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does not mind  
he guidance  
k gain a greater  
teacher. Teachers  
They want you to  
u want to succeed.



Even if you do not have any questions, give the professor feedback on how he could improve the class or what you have learned from the class. Believe it or not, professors need encouragement too. Your insight does make a difference.

If you try forming a relationship with your teacher, you will find that the class becomes much more interesting. Most likely, students will

become more engaged in discussion and class participation. In addition, the student will definitely feel more comfortable and confident about the outcome of the class.

There are several advantages to having a good professor/student relationship. The first is the positive impression the teacher gains. The second is a greater level of respect between professor and student. Professor becomes a human and not a big bully that could possibly determine your future. The third is when a situation occurs

where you are not performing your best or you cannot come to class, you will not have to go to great depths proving to the professor that you are honest or reliable. The professor will already know.

Furthermore, good student/professor relationships open the door for future assistance. The relationship goes beyond the classroom. For example, if you need a recommendation for a job, they are most likely willing to provide one for you.

Students should always keep in mind when weighing the advantages and disadvantages of their actions is how will it benefit them in the future. So, before overlooking the many concerns and questions you may have about a particular subject, ask yourself a question. What's more important, your grades or your pride?

*Sarah Poole is a sophomore English Education major at Berea College.*

## ■ FAMILY

### Every Day is a New Adventure

*"Beautiful you are, you're my supper star,  
shining on the galaxy."*

*"Where ever you go I will find you,  
you light up the world behind you,  
you're my super star, LaNyah."*

By **FELECIA OUTSEY**

Above are the words from a lullaby that I composed to sing my little baby to sleep, upon suggestion of a Berea pediatrician, when she was four months old. She is now four years old, and frequently assures me that she is no longer a little baby but a "big girl." I just reply, "You will always be my baby no matter how old you are." But I know that her words are true; as I have watched her, along with the rest of the college community, grow up in what I consider to be a short amount of time, from my little baby to my big girl. In all this, I can't help but fear the day that she will leave me, as I did, to go off kindergarten, let alone college.

When I first arrived in Berea on February 1, 1999, with a new life in my hands, and that's literally speaking, LaNyah was just born three months before I ventured off to college, I didn't know what was really in store for me. Like all, I could image having to wake up in the middle of the night with my face already covered in books, to tend to a crying and demanding baby who appeared to know exactly the right time to cry. Although this turned out to be a reality at times, it wasn't as big a deal as expected. It took me a while to realize that I was somebody's mother, although I hadn't much time to plan for it, only about nine months. But I soon realized that was all the time that was needed. You can't prepare to be a parent or shall I say study for it, as with a test. However, good parenting skills are developed along the way, throughout the interaction with your child. I have yet to learn all of the skills that come with parenting. As I have experienced, the child ironically becomes the teacher of life's lessons on love, joy, dependence, happiness, and most of the time patience.

It is now impossible for me to imagine my life without LaNyah, who occasionally wakes me up in the morning, is always willing to sing and dance with me, and accommodates me wherever I go. Every day is a new adventure with her. I can honestly say that I do not regret being a mother at such an early age, as older moms may perceive. In my opinion, this is one of the better times because I am young enough to relate to my

## THE WORD

**Question:** How do you perceive American and International relations since September 11, 2001?

"I believe that it brought our nation together but it made us feel like everyone was against us and because of that we as a nation were forced to send troops over and it has really hurt a lot of families and left them wondering why does my son or daughter, brother or sister have to go. I feel this way because my own brother was shipped out last week and I pray for his safety everyday and I pray that there is no war. Since 9/11, our relations have been tested because we as a nation truly want to know who is with us and who is against us."

**Dennis Dow**

"I think international relations are better since September 11, because we are much more aware of our neighbors and they of us. We now know in the USA that we are not invincible, but part of a tender puzzle that must fit together to work. We are alike and need to forgive and be forgiven. We must learn the delicate dance of overlooking small differences while holding each other accountable for the big things."

**Lee Fossett**

## Focus on Relationships

Continued from p. 7

child's needs and wants. Not only this, but I have just enough energy to engage in an hour or so of fun play. Thanks to God, I have also been able to provide for her. Being a student and juggling school and work, I do not pretend to have all the time in the world to devote to her, but like all parents it is a matter of making time, in which I make an effort to do.

My relationship with my daughter is one that I cherish the most and nothing will change that. Words can only express a little about my love for her, which is infinite. The best thing that I have enjoyed about our interactions so far is the laughter that she brings. I had never imagined the amount of joy that someone so little can give. Not only does she depend on me for love and protection, I must be there for her to offer understanding. So in my quest to be a better parent, I seek to understand her as a child and to further show my appreciation toward her as a friend and not just a daughter.

In closing, when asked the meaning of her name, *Nyah*, I answer it means spring water – Pure in form and essential for all of life's purposes for without it one cannot live.

*Felecia Outsey is a Senior majoring in Physical Education at Berea College.*

### ■ POEM: ON RELATIONSHIPS UNFULFILLED

If I could just tell you...



If I could just tell you how I felt,  
But it's not that easy.  
It's harder to express myself in voice  
Than it is on paper  
I want to tell you  
How my heart beats when I see you  
The nervousness that entices me when you're near  
I want to tell you  
How nice you look  
And how I'm attracted to your curves  
I want to tell you  
How good you smell  
How our eye contact sends chills down my spine  
I want to tell you all these things and more  
I know it seems as if I exude confidence  
But my shyness prohibits me  
From approaching you  
Another moment lost  
Another potential love gone

**MICAH CARGIN**

## POET'S CORNER

# The Silhouette

At the end of the narrow passage I saw a silhouette,  
The figure was unlike anything I have ever seen before,  
It drew closer, and with each step forward It took, I took a step back,  
A step back in order to avoid It's lure,  
And in my retreat I was stopped by a friend.

I cannot understand it, I am a strong man with few fears,  
But just by the sight of It my eyes flooded with tears,  
It, I did not understand, everything It stood for, everything It is,  
And everything It was to be was something, in my life, I have never seen.  
Most people fear what they do not understand and I am no different,  
So I turned the opposite way and began to flee,  
But when I turned,  
in my path was my best friend who is always there to talk when I need Him.  
He told me not to fear It, for this thing was good,  
In fact, It was something like He introduced to me  
And many others and I should embrace It and Keep It if I could,  
So I took his advice and for every step forward It took, I took two,  
So now me and this thing are friends, and to let It get away from way,  
But I am thankful for It, and for turning me back in It's direction...  
I thank my best friend everyday.

At the end of the narrow passage I see a silhouette,  
The figures is unlike anything I had ever seen before,  
It draws closer, and with each step forward It takes, I take two towards It.  
I no longer try to avoid It's lure, because I don't want be without It  
anymore.

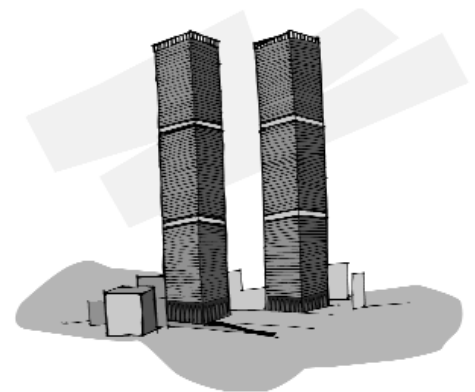
**EDDIE JEFFREYS**

## THE WORD

**Question:** How do you perceive American and International relations since September 11, 2001?

"This past summer I was fortunate enough to visit my aunt in South Africa for two weeks. It was a lovely vacation, but also a very crude eye-opener. I have never traveled internationally before, so I cannot compare it first-hand to our relations before September 11, but I was told by more than one Afrikaner that the world still hates America. I was even told that some countries applauded the airplane clashes. Before my trip, I was under the impression that most countries felt sorry for our loss...boy was I wrong! In conclusion, I feel that our international relations are no better than before September 11, 2001."

**Shannon Sommers**



## NEWS BITES

### Martin Luther King Day Schedule of Events

	Classes Cancelled.
9:00am	Breakfast
11:00	Chapel Service
12:30pm	March to City Hall
3:00	Convocation: John Harris: "What if King Were Alive Today?"

### 2002 Homecoming Court announced

Congratulations for placing in the Homecoming court to:

**Rashaad Abdur-Rahman**  
**Xavier Mckinxie**  
**Jeremy McShan**  
**Carl Settles**  
**Dena Burress**  
**Christina Caul**  
**Nisha Dorsey**  
**Kekeli Ekoue**  
**Felicia Sullivan**  
**LaShaundra Thedford**  
**Mary Trumbo**

### Welcome aboard!

We would like to welcome our new "faculty and staff of color":



McGhee

**Paula McGhee,**  
Director, Black Cultural  
Center



Cunningham

**Lynn Cunningham,**  
Program Associate, Black  
Cultural Center

**Linda Strong-Leek,**  
Women's Studies

**Austin Ahantou,**  
History

Welcome to each of you and we're proud to have you in the Berea family!

## POET'S CORNER

# A Celestial Fantasy

In my sky sits a moon, a sun and few stars.  
The moon is a woman, young beautiful and bright.  
Across from her sits the sun.  
The sun is her mate; he was placed there to admire her beauty,  
To intimately converse with her eternally!  
The sun rises taciturn in the morning, gently warming the surface of the moon.  
It brightens and brightens, becoming more luminous until the few stars in my sky  
Join its strong rays.  
As the day comes to a close,  
The sun returns to the darkness as his sweet moon begins to shine.  
At the moment when they pass one another,  
One rising and one setting,  
They confess their everlasting love for each other.  
There is a cold chill cleansing the sun's body,  
And abnormal warmth that attacks the moon.  
They feel each other's presence,  
A feeling that will last always and can never be taken away.  
At this moment, my sky is stationary,  
Everything without movement.  
There is silence.  
The whole galaxy sits still.  
Nothing dares to move during this tranquil moment of lust.  
The moon relights the sky as her sun rests,  
Dreaming of the next moment he can feel the chill of his celestial partner.  
At the end of her reign, she returns to her state of solitude,  
But first, she passes her sun.  
They converse again, this time more sweetly than before,  
And the cycle continues.  
Each day they meet each other, once in the morning, once in the evening,  
Admiring each other's fine qualities, warming and chilling each other  
Simultaneously.  
The moments of gently caressing each other's bodies are the moments they  
Anticipate forever.  
If ever a day comes that the moon shines no more,  
The sun will shine no more.  
Everything will be placid,  
Stationary in darkness,  
Awaiting the moon's return.

**ASHLEY MILLER**

## FACULTY REFLECTION

# Kinship and Male-Female Relationships in Modern Africa

By **AUSTIN AHANTOU**

Marriage, it is true, is still a preferred social norm in Africa. But the African traditional sense of marriage has continued to change. There is a contest between the strength of kinship expectation about marriage and fertility and young people's own thoughts and feelings about the place of sexual and romantic relationships in modern African life. Modern life has increasingly made the business of love into science. The elation and euphoria of individual love differ greatly from those of traditional African model. Yet, African cultural orientation leads the way to the initiation to the process of marriage. Finding a partner for marriage and completing the rituals—both sacred and secular—to marriage have become diversified to the extent that kinship influence in such matters is gradually eroding. The most common current practice is that young men and women meet where they go to school, where they work, or where they live.



Relatives except those of the men who prefer to initiate 'marriage by post' have less influence over the selection of the men with whom African women will enter into conjugal relationships. In some cases, parents of the girl never actually meet the man and, in those cases where they do, it is without any formal introduction.

Young African men and women, in many cases, having already successfully delayed their marriages by convincing their parents or kin to let them continue with schooling, have taken a first step in the direction of controlling when and how they marry.

*Austin Ahantou is a campus minister and assistant professor at Berea College.*

## SOUND OFF

### Unity in Our Community

The black community of today lacks unity. Not the unity that aims to unite blacks, but the unity that strives to unite people of all races. We as a community have no problem bringing accord and agreement amongst ourselves, but when it includes people of other races, we tend to be hesitant.

Helping a fellow sister or brother of the same race is a great deed, but giving a helping hand to someone of another ethnicity is even a greater deed, because it breaks down the walls of division between different races. The lunchroom setting of the cafeteria somewhat displays this division. On a typical day, the majority of African Americans sit in one area of the cafeteria, while white people sit in other areas. Even though this is not purposely done out of hate or discrimination, it shows the division that still exists. True unity is not the inclusion of a certain race, but the inclusion of all people. This is what we need!

**Ronnie Farmer**

# MISSION STATEMENT

The Black Cultural Center first opened its doors in July 1983. The Center was established and based on the premise that true integration and equality cannot be achieved without a general awareness and understanding of black culture. The Black Cultural Center provides programs and services that foster cross-cultural exchanges and intentional social intercourse.

The mission of the Black Cultural Center is to:

- assist Berea College in maintaining an environment that acknowledges, respects, and enhances diversity and promotes multicultural educational opportunities;
- assist the College in its effort to recruit, retain, and graduate students of color;
- assist students of color in developing a greater understanding of his/her own culture and heritage
- provide support services, program, and activities that promote the intellectual, career, social, moral, and personal development of students of color and assist them in achieving their highest educational potential; and
- assist Berea College in recruiting and retaining faculty of color.

# ANCESTOR HIGHLIGHT

## Angela Davis

In 1968, after receiving her masters degree in philosophy and joining the Black Panthers, Angela Davis also became a member of the communist party. Because she was affiliated with the Black Panthers and communism, the US government closely watched her and in 1970 Davis became the third woman in history to emerge on the FBI's Most Wanted List. Davis was charged with murder, kidnapping, and interstate flight. Although she was not physically involved in the crime, she spent sixteen months in jail.



Davis

After her discharge in 1971, Davis published an assortment of essays including *Morning: Voices of Resistance*. She has also written her autobiography and another book *Woman, Race and Class*. Currently Davis is a professor at the University of California at Santa Cruz. She spends a lot of her time delivering speeches to enthused audiences around the country.

# African Diaspora

Continued from p. 2

identity and ethnic pride. In the making of history, communities are far more important than even the greatest of leaders, for the community is the institution most capable of passing a distinctive historical tradition to future generations.

Communities bind people together in multiple ways. They can be as small as the local neighborhood, in which people maintain face-to-face relations, or as large as the imagined entity of the nation. Networks of kinship and friendship, and

connections across generations and among families establish the bonds essential to community life. Shared feelings about values and history establish the basis for common identity. In

communities, people find the power to act collectively in their own interest. But American communities often took shape as a result of serious conflicts among groups, and within

**African-Americans share the commonality of an African heritage; a connection with the "motherland" that only black people understand.**

communities there often has been significant fighting among competing groups or classes. Thus the term community includes tension and discord, as well as harmony and agreement.

I embrace a vision of America as "A democracy of nationalities, cooperating voluntarily and autonomously through common institutions...a multiplicity in a unity, and orchestration of mankind." I also embrace this vision of diversity and community throughout the African Diaspora.