



the ONYX

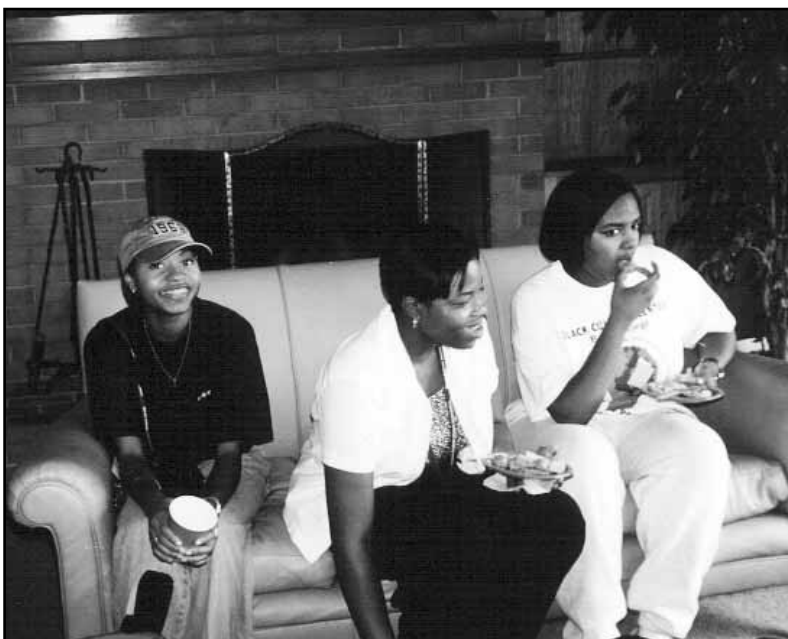
*the Berea College
Black Cultural Center Student Newsletter*

Crossroads

BCC will have new home in Woods-Penn

From Staff Reports

After spending a great year in the Home Management House for the 1998-99 school year, the BCC will move into its new location, Woods-Penniman, at the end of the summer. The Woods-Penn renovators have been working fast and furiously to finish what will, in many ways, alter the social life as we know it at Berea. According to senior member of the Woods-Penn Planning Committee, Jonathan Johnson, the renovated Woods-Penn will be a good environment to promote social interactions. The project is called "crossroads" because the BCC, Appalachian Center, International Center, CPO, and Student Life will bring all people together in one place. It will be like a microcosm of Berea College because people from every area of the college will have to go there, promoting true diversity.



Felicia Swinney, Shaquita Smith, and Stacy Gould stop by for food and fun at the Open House in Home Management.



is a student publication of the
Black Cultural Center
Berea College
CPO 166, Berea, KY 40404

(606) 986-9341 ext. 6516

(606) 986-4506 fax

www.berea.edu

- **EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**
- *John N. Drogin*
- **STUDENT PROGRAMS EDITOR**
- *Kareem D. Jenkins*
- **STUDENT DEVELOPMENT EDITOR**
- *Tamika Jackson*
- **SPECIAL EVENTS EDITOR**
- *Natalia Gamarra*
- **CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**
- *LaVonne Rice and Sylvester Little*

Inside *this Issue*

• *Third Annual Reverend
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Celebration*

PAGE 2

*Students and faculty
celebrate Kwanzaa*

PAGE 3

*Black History Month
Celebration*

PAGE 4

*Mentoring Program takes a
road trip*

PAGE 6

*Amiri Baraka visits Berea
College*

PAGE 6

*Berea College Students have
an opportunity to get
involved with important
issues*

PAGE 7

*Famous black writer and
feminist speaks at Women's
History Month Convocation*

PAGE 8

**VOLUME 1
NUMBER 1**

SPRING 1999



Having my Say

Where do we
go from here?

By Linda
Thomas-Buchanan

Where do we go from here? I have asked this question continuously since my arrival in September 1996—not simply of me, but of my staff, students, and colleagues. Of course, there is never an easy answer and on some occasions no answer at all when addressing issues of diversity. “Where do we go from here?” is the prelude to a melody of questions. I believe, in a benevolent way, we have answered {maybe not completely} “What should we do?” and “How should we do it?” Now, we must grapple with “Why should we do it?” Should we do it because it is the first of the Great Commitments on which this institution was established? Or, should we do it because it is the “Christian” thing to do? Or, should we do it because our democratic society demands it of us?



Continued on
facing page

A day of Diversity and Hope

Keeping the dream alive

By Natalia Gamarra

The Twelfth Annual Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration (MLK) was a day of remembrance and hope. *Ring with the Harmonies of Liberty* was the theme for the celebration for this year. The day began at 8:30 AM with the



King

Beloved Community Breakfast. Keynote Speaker, Dr. Phil Schmidt, Associate Provost for Student and Academic Services, reminisced on his childhood days growing up in New York amidst the civil rights movement.

Another highlight of the morning was a rendition of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech *I Have A Dream* by Sylvester Little, senior Theater major. This event was closed by a powerful prayer given by Joe Smith, junior Chemistry major. The events continued with a moving Chapel Service. Duane Smith, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religion, delivered the homily. His theme was “How Did Dr. King Keep His Faith?” Maurice Chamblin, junior Music major, sang a lovely and impassioned gospel song.

The highlight of the day was the March to City Hall. At 12:00 Noon, a group of

faculty and students marched from Danforth Chapel to City Hall. Mayor Kerby gave the opening remarks while Dr. Steve Boyce, Academic Vice President and Provost followed. There were also two faculty and two student reflections given. The main theme throughout the program was “Where do we go from here?”. Andrew Baskin, Assistant Professor of General Studies, talked about how society has gotten too comfortable and if Dr. King were still here, he would be making us very uncomfortable.

The last event of the day was a “Bond” Fire, originally to be held at Brushy Fork. Because of bad weather conditions, the location was changed to the Snack Bar. It was a time for students and faculty members to discuss and digest the events taken place at Berea College and how to celebrate future MLK holidays.

The struggle is far from over. The millennium is coming upon us, and people have trivialized Dr. King's dream to a song or a speech. There remains a lot of work to do, yet people were filled with a sense of purpose and hope. It is good to know that people still care and want to keep Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s spirit and dream alive.

BCC sponsors first annual

Kwanzaa Celebration!

By Kareem D. Jenkins

The Black Cultural Center, in its efforts to promote a true understanding of black culture, celebrated Kwanzaa.

Kwanzaa (meaning 'first fruits') is a cultural holiday introduced in 1966 by Dr. Maulena Karenga.

The Black Cultural Center, along with student organizations, planned the celebration which took place in December in the Snack Bar of the Alumni Building. People in attendance had the opportunity to hear students, staff and faculty recite the Nguzo Saba (Seven Principles). The principles represent the ideas of unity, self-determination, collective work, cooperation, purpose, creativity and faith.



The big feast at the Kwanzaa Celebration.

The evening also included performances by students and faculty. Dr. Stephanie Browner, English and Literature professor, recited a powerful poem instructing the children to listen to the wisdom of the elders. Attendees also participated in a group project designed to reflect and renew their spirits.

A Karamu (feast) followed the ceremony where traditional African and soul food dishes were served. The celebration provided people of all ethnicity the chance to celebrate and understand an integral part of the black experience.

Student Spotlight

By John N. Drogin

Aprèl Jonel Dent is a 22-year-old, senior Technology Industrial Arts



Dent

major from Birmingham, Alabama. After graduation from Berea, she would like to work in the fields of graphics or illustration. She currently works as a gifted artist for Campus Activities, making banners and posters. She

enjoys art because it is an expression that "is yours, it's not right or wrong,

it's your own thoughts."

Outside of the classroom, Aprèl has enjoyed being in the Black Music Ensemble because "It gave me an opportunity to meet more students and it was close to the church-type atmosphere I had at home." She has also worked at Foodservice and in the Mentoring Program for the Black Cultural Center. Aprèl has participated in the Black Student Union and the Orientation-Team, which was "a chance to see new students so they won't be afraid to approach you, and it makes people feel comfortable."

About Berea, Aprèl says: "the people I've met have made it better and I'm grateful for the college experience."

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Continued from facing page



Or, should we do it because it is our humanitarian duty?

It does not matter which reason we choose to celebrate diversity, just as long as an awareness and appreciation for it resonate in our minds, hearts, souls, and actions. For, it is not enough to increase the enrollment of African American students if we do not possess a true conception and recognition of the vast cultural experiences that they bring with them. Nor, is it enough to recruit more faculty of color, if we cannot acknowledge and appreciate the significant and noteworthy contributions they make to this institution, community, and the academy. Furthermore, it is not ethical to parade our Great Commitments if we fail to act upon them.

Since campus diversity is the foundation on which Berea College stands, we should be on the frontline combating issues of equality and justice in higher education and our community. We should ensure that the environment in which we educate and prepare our students is an inclusive and inviting one. We should make certain that our campus reflects the democratic world in which we live and participate together.

Dr. Linda Thomas-Buchanan is the the Director of the Black Cultural Center and an assistant professor at Berea College.

Black Potpourri

Empowerment Through Diversity

Black History Month 1999

By Kareem D. Jenkins

The Black Cultural Center and the Black History Month Task Force embarked on its special mission to educate the community on the many different experiences of black people with this year's theme, *Black Potpourri: Empowerment Through Diversity*.

The month began with a convocation featuring a choreopoem, *Our Young Black Men Are Dying and Nobody Seems To Care*. The three-man performance examined the situation facing African American males with compassion, humor, and above all, honesty. The Convocation was well received and enjoyed by many. Freshman, Cornelius Butler, remarked that "this was one of the best Convos yet."

Campus Activities Board featured the critically

acclaimed, *Amistad*, in celebration of the month. The film screening was well attended and enjoyed by all.

The following week of activities were the Black Summit, a student forum-discussion, and a Copasetic, a lively thought-provoking coffeehouse.

One of the highlights of the month included the Third Annual Unity Banquet. The banquet has gained notoriety on the campus and in the surrounding community. Tickets to this year's banquet, held at the Boone Tavern Hotel, sold out in a matter of days!

Many notable people were in attendance at the banquet including, Berea College President, Dr. Larry Shinn and his wife

Mrs. Nancy Shinn, Vice-President of Labor and Student Life, Gail Wolford, and many other campus officials.

Special students were recognized for their academic and social achievements with the 1999 Distinguished Student Awards. Recipients included, Freshwoman, Felicia Swinney; Sophomore, Samuel Wornor; Junior, Joseph Smith; and Senior, Charles Kaiza.

The keynote speaker, Dr. P. Eric Abercumbie, delivered a rousing speech stressing the importance and power of diversity. Dr. Abercumbie is the Director of the African-American



Carribbean Conspiracy jamming out at the Copasetic Coffeehouse.

Arri rsity



Our Young Black Men actors and BCC staff gather at the stage after the show.

Cultural Research Center at the University of Cincinnati. He is also the originator of the nationally recognized, Black Man Think Tank. The event ended with a performance by 4U, one of Louisville's most sought-after jazz and R&B bands.

Saturday night was a time to let loose and jam at the Black Cultural Center's *Pajama Jam*. The event was held at Danforth Residence Hall. Kent Juett spun the hottest R&B, Hip-Hop, Rap, and Reggae jams. The winner of the Pajama Jam contest was none other than

Berea's own, Maria Cunningham, who wore the latest in sleepwear complete with hair rollers!

On Monday, February 22, the Alumni Building's Baird Lounge was transformed into a tropical paradise, as Louisville's Caribbean Conspiracy performed. This five-member reggae ensemble brought the heavy percussion

of Africa, and the sizzle of Latin America into each song. The evening was filled with dancing and feasting on exotic fruits.

The Black Summit featured Lexington's Marc Johnson, in a discussion on black gays and lesbians. The evening was engaging and thought-provoking, as attendees

articulated their opinions and concerns. The evening was successful in bringing about understanding and acceptance.

The month ended with a comedy showcase. The Black Comedy Tour, featuring Damon Williams, came to Berea, Saturday, February 27. The Snack Bar of the Alumni Building was filled to capacity as Damon Williams brought down the house. An after-party was held. Students, staff, and faculty danced, ate, and mingled with the comedian.

This year's Black History Month was truly a diverse experience, highlighting just a portion of the beauty and strength of the black experience.



Students at the Unity Banquet: "where's the food?"

Mentoring Program participants take a Hockey Trip

By John N. Drogin

December 11 was a unique, fun-filled evening of cheering and hockey excitement. Mentoring Program participants, Eugene Cabknor, Waahida Tolbert, Syreeta Pratt, Shaquita Smith, Laticia Taylor, Micah Cargin, Romeatrius Crutcher, Jonathan Johnson, Samuel Wornor, Methusaleh Nyangora, Regina Washington, Linda Thomas-Buchanan, Willie Buchanan, Tamika Weaver, and John Drogin went to the Kentucky Thoroughblades game at Rupp Arena in Lexington.

The trip was a good opportunity for Mentoring Program participants to bond in a setting outside the Berea campus, and to see one another in a different atmosphere. The game was at the perfect time for the Mentees to relieve some first semester finals stress. The Thoroughblades won the game, but more importantly many memories were made and friendships strengthened.

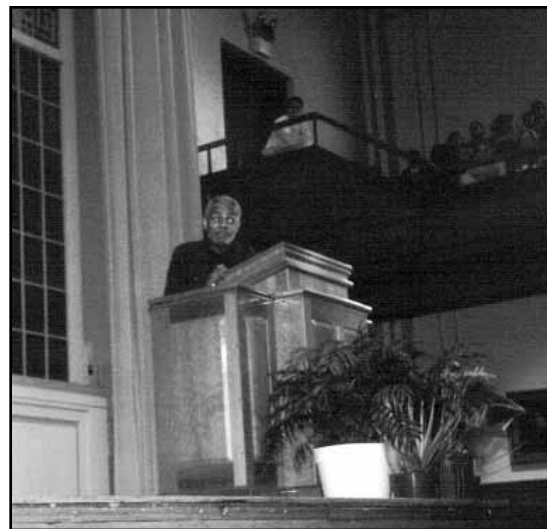
Renowned Amiri Baraka comes to Berea

By John N. Drogin

On February 25, the nationally renowned poet, author, professor, and political activist, formerly known as Leroy Jones, spoke at the Carter G. Woodson Memorial Convocation. Baraka has written many poems, plays, and books which have inspired people all over the country. His message was a positive one of hope and achievement.

Baraka was eloquent, profound and enthusiastic in his presentation that stressed integrating Black History with American History. He said, "I await the day when we have American Studies departments as strong as English departments," and then added with a touch of fervent nationalism that "George Washington won that war."

Baraka spoke of the importance of being an intellectual: "What an intellectual does is



Baraka expatiates a point at Convocation.

search—try to find out the truth of things, rather than have things delivered to them." He claims that W.E.B. Dubois was the greatest intellectual of this century and Dubois said that many people have suffered but none of them were real estate. Baraka then put an emphasis on the class abuse that has occurred and that Blacks have a visible class distinction. He said, "America hides the poor white people...there's nothing intrinsically good about being black or white, otherwise you wouldn't have Adolph Hitler or Clarence Thomas." Baraka stressed the value of the human being and the quality of their ideas, as well as their relationships in the real world.

News Bites

Awards! Awards!

Congratulations to the Distinguished Student Service Award Recipients:

Felicia Swinney **Samuel Wornor, Jr.**
Joseph Smith **Charles Kaiza**

Congratulations to the African and African American students were big winners at this year's scholarship day:

Sarah Elizabeth Hagans, Mary Macauley Smith Award; **Dilwonberish Aberra**, Chin-Wang Prize; **Antoinette L. Kennedy**, Edd C. Hogg Memorial Scholarship; **Chinwe Kpaduwa**, Holocaust Travel Program Award; **Suleiman Oko-Ogua**, Holocaust Travel Program Award and **Dammon Babbage**, The Father Henry L. Parker Award

Congratulations!

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

Maurice Chamblin, The New SGA President; **Romeatrius Crutcher**, Sophomore Class President and **Jason Oden**, Sophomore Class Vice-President

Welcome to next year's BCC staff!

There are three new students holding primary positions next year:

Chinwe Kpdauwa, Public Relations Manager; **Harriet Collins**, Student Administrative Assistant to the Director and **Tifanie McMillan**, Student Program Coordinator

Holding secondary positions are:

Shaquita Smith, Office Assistant to the Public Relations Manager; **Sheria Smith**, Office Assistant to the Student Program Coordinator and **Benjamin Harris**, Office Assistant to Student Development Coordinator

Upcoming Events!

BCC Farewell Senior BBQ, May 14, 4:00 PM, Windswept.

Web page to be up!

We are delighted to announce that the BCC web page will be on the Berea College home page in June. Please visit it at www.berea.edu



Pictured from left, back row: Terrence Surles, Charlie Shavers, Tamika Weaver, Kareem Jenkins. Front row: Linda Thomas-Buchanan, Taneka Vasciannie. In Cincinatti at the Black Man Think Tank.

Come join the **Fun!**

By Tamika Jackson

In the past three years, the Black Cultural Center has provided the African and African American students on Berea College's campus with leadership and academic opportunities, and events designed with them in mind. Two of the events the Center has sponsored are the Black Man Think Tank and the Small College Minority Conference.

The Black Man Think Tank is held annually at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio. It was developed in 1983 by Dr. Paul Eric Abercrombie to provide an intellectual, stimulating and culturally enriching program whereby many of the issues relating to black males in America can be discussed. Some of the speakers at the Think tank included Dr. Na'im Akbar (former speaker at Berea College), Civil Rights Activist, Dick Gregory, Reverend Al Sharpton, and motivational speaker Dennis Kimbro.

The Small College Minority Conference is held at Centre College. It was developed in 1995 by the efforts of a group of Centre College Black Student Union mem-

bers. The idea was generated by a thought to gather minority students from small colleges in Kentucky once a year to discuss issues that may commonly take place at various predominantly white institutions. With the new millennium in mind, the planning committee decided to reach beyond the boundaries of the state and extend an invitation to other minority students at small colleges throughout the South. The ultimate goal of the conference is to establish an ongoing platform for minority students to meet challenges and build opportunities on their respective campuses.

The Black Cultural Center has also provided the African American women of Berea College with an organization entitled Black Women Caucus (BWC). The organization is designed to serve as an advocate and support system for African American women on campus. Its main focus is to serve as an instrument through which African American women are able to express their concerns about issues they face globally as well as locally. BWC is also concerned with educating other students about the

pioneering roles and major contributions of African American women to this society. Membership is open to all students who share the concerns of BWC. Black Women Caucus would like to encourage all African American and African women to become members. With support and participation, BWC can serve as a strong advocate for all African American women on campus. It is also an expectation of the BWC, with the help of the Black Cultural Center, to attend the African American Women on Tour. This conference is held in many areas and gives empowerment workshops on: advancing your career while maintaining a balanced lifestyle, networking with other sisters on the move, building a healthier, wealthier you, re-discovering *your* essentials and *your* passions, and exercising and energizing your mind, body, and spirit.

The Black Women's Caucus is still in the developmental stages and if you would like to get involved please Email me at Tamika_Jackson@Berea.edu or call the Black Cultural Center at extension 6517.

Our Mission



The Black Cultural Center was established in 1983 on the premise that true integration and equality cannot be achieved without a general understanding of the black culture. Over a decade later, the philosophical foundation of the Center has not changed.

The Black Cultural Center continues to support the historic commitments of Berea College. In particular, the Center will “provide an educational opportunity for African American, Appalachian, and white students who have great promise and limited economic backgrounds. We will assert the kinship of all people and provide interracial education with a particular emphasis on understanding and equality among African Americans and Whites.”

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.

Love and spirituality

Black feminist, writer and educator speaks at Convo

By LaVon Rice

I first heard of bell hooks when I was getting my hair done. Her aunt, Ellen Clay, was a friend of my mother’s and my hairdresser. Along with sizzling hair, singed ears, and the smell of hot oil, I read Miss Ellen’s proudly kept copies of Ms. Magazine, in which bell hooks’ penetrating commentary often found voice.

Much has changed. Miss Ellen moved away, and I longer endure straightening combs, but years later, I find myself still intrigued and engaged with bell hooks’ exposure and indictment of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other societal ills that keep us from knowing one another fully.

There were those of us who were lucky enough to get to know her more fully, especially during her convocation on March 4. I was honored to have her agree to speak at Berea College upon receiving my letter asking her to come, as well as by the opportunity to introduce her. hooks’ presentation, reminiscent of the reconciliatory yet powerful politics of the civil rights movement, integrated righteous indignation and the redemp-

tion of love. She heralded a “love ethic,” insofar as it provided strength to challenge racism and to encourage accountability. She said what we have always known—racism will never fundamentally change unless hearts and consciences change, never mind integration, social programs, and politically correct language. Racism, bell hooks declares, is a wound that will remain unhealed as long as Whites insist they don’t see color and have plenty of black friends. The scar, deep and wide and affecting all members of society, only will begin its true healing when there is an acknowledgement and an endeavor to change the problem. Not by posturing and denial.

In too brief conversations and encounters with bell hooks, native daughter of Kentucky, I found that her fierce intellect and incisive perception could only be surpassed by her grace and generosity of spirit. Radically unlike the “whining” portrait painted of her in convocation comments, bell hooks is a woman warrior determined to be an agent of peace, not by concessionary politics but by “telling it like it is.” So, read her books!

Ancestor

Highlight.....

**MARY MCLEOD
BETHUNE
1875-1955**

Mary McLeod Bethune devoted her life to bringing dignity, opportunity, and hope to African Americans. Mr. Bethune was a teacher, the builder of a school, a public speaker and a governmental administrator.

Mary Bethune started a school in Daytona Beach, Florida for girls, with only \$1.50. She earned money for the school by working over the years in many types of jobs. In 1923, the Bethune School was combined with the Cookman Institute, to become the Bethune-Cookman College.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Mrs. Bethune to serve as the Director of the Negro Affairs Division of the National Youth Administration. In 1935 she was given the Spingarn Medal for Negro achievement.

Source Edu-Cards a Division of KPB Industries, Bethlehem, Pa.