

Sojourner Truth



Volume 3 ♦ Issue 1 ♦ Winter 2009

End of an Era

Dr. Charles Mate-Kole retires

◆ Since the establishment of the CCSU Center for Africana Studies, Dr. Charles Mate-Kole has been the face and the embodiment of the ideals and goals of the center. In the Summer of 2009, Dr. Mate-Kole, the founding Director of the Center, surprised everyone by taking an early retirement from CCSU.

◆ Dr. Mate-Kole joined CCSU as an associate professor of Psychology in 1996 and was promoted to full professor in 1999. Immediately upon his appointment, he became a member of the African Studies Committee. He became very involved with the activities of the committee and later assumed the position of chair. He envisioned a larger mission and role for African Studies and therefore worked with other faculty members and the administration to establish the Center for Africana Studies. As the founding Director of the Africana Center, he has helped expand Central's role in the community, enabling it to better serve students interested in African issues.

◆ As the Director of the Center for Africana Studies, Dr. Mate-Kole was responsible for organizing campus lectures and many other campus-wide activities, as well as community activities sponsored by the Center. The Center provides a home for students to complete assignments and get mentoring. It provides an after-school preparatory program to high school students
Continue on page 16:



Dr. Charles Mate-Kole

Letter from the Editor:

◆ Who is the voice of the African Diaspora? Does it come from the left or the right? Is it Marxist-Leninists or privatization and globalization? Is it assimilation or revolution? Does it come from Minister Louis Farrakhan or Reverend Al Sharpton? Does it come from Michael Steele or Harold Ford? Is it Jimi Hendrix or Jay-Z? Is it Oprah Winfrey? Is it President Obama? Is it a Judeo-Christian, a Muslim, a Traditional belief system, or is it a miscegenation of them all? Who speaks for the dreams, triumphs, tragedies, and successes of a people that are as diverse as each individual snowflake? Who will tell the stories, the lamentations and psalms of a continent that gave birth to humanity?

◆ The Sojourner Truth Newsletter strives to be an outlet for all those voices. We want to bring issues dealing with the Africana experience to the intellectual forefront, our barbershop conversations, and Sunday morning sermons.

◆ In this edition you will read, among others, about the "Ethics of Aid" - the theme of the Fall 2009 Annual Conference of the CCSU Center for Africana Studies, You will see images of laughter; you will see images of love, and images of life. You will see images of a vibrant people with a vibrant culture. You will see images from 2009 Culture Shock, an international and intercultural event sponsored by the CCSU Africana Students

Continue on page 16:

Editorial Board of the Sojourner Truth News letter

Fall 2009

Mr. Michael Wilson,
Ms. Ramatou Sangare,
Ms. Tamika Harvey,
Olufunke Adebayo,
Jamel Cooper,
Prof. Jerry Butler,
Prof. Peter LeMaire,
Prof. Chengiah Ragaven,
Professor Okey Ndibe

Guest Editor
Communication major
Graphic design major
Biology major
Journalism major
Department of Art
Department of Physics &
Earth Science
International Studies
Program
Department of English
Trinity College

Contents

Charles Mate-Kole	Cover Story
Guest editor's notes	Front page
Conference report	Page 3
Introduction	3
Keynote address	3
Okey Ndibe	15
Amadu Seidu	12
Amistad	4
Culture shock	5
Deconstructing the myth of Diversity	6
To become man enough	13
Student's corner: Closing the achievement gap	9
Natural Poems	10 11/12



16th Annual Conference of the Center for Africana Studies, Fall 2009

The sixteenth (16th) Annual Conference of the CCSU Center for Africana Studies was held at the Torp Theater of Central Connecticut State University on Friday



Dr. Warren Perry

November 6, 2009. The theme of the conference was “ Ethics of Aid”. The conference brought together experts in the field of Aid to the developing world. Invited speakers included Mr. Binyavanga Wainaina, a well known African writer and activist, Dr. Timothy Rickard, professor emeritus of Central Connecticut State University, Dr. Adeyinka Banwo, a Nigerian political and social activist and visiting professor at Westfield State College in Massachusetts, Dr. Okey Ndibe, a writer and professor of English at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, Dr. Evelyn Philips, professor of Anthropology at CCSU, and Mr. Amadu Seidu, a community organizer in Ghana and currently a graduate student in International Studies at CCSU. The conference was opened with remarks from Dr. Jack Miller, President of CCSU, and followed by remarks by Dr. Zdzislaw Kremens, Dean of the CCSU School of Engineering and Technology. Dr. Carl Lovitt, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, provided opening remarks for the afternoon session of the conference. The conference was moderated by Dr. Warren Perry, professor of Archeology and Co-Director of the Center for Africana Studies, Dr. Olusegun Odesina, Associate Dean of the CCSU School of Technology, and Dr. Peter LeMaire, professor of Physics at CCSU. Mr. Wainaina gave the keynote address, Dr. Rickard spoke on the “Ethics of Grassroots NGOs” with reference to the Ghana Health and Education Initiative (GHEI), a grassroots foundation, founded by his daughter and an alumna of the CCSU Center for Africana Studies’ Ghana Program, Dr. Diana Rickard. Information on GHEI can be found at www.ghei.org. Dr. Philips gave an overview of the Center’s Ghana Program. Find in this issue, excerpts from some of the speakers at the conference.



Binyavanga Wainaina

PHRUUUUUU!

The saviour of Kumbayaa

BINYAVANGA WAINAINA
(Keynote Speaker)

Introduction: Deep voice, in an English accent: “There is a beautiful valley, Kumbayaa, in a primeval forest, above the hills of Ixopo-on-Mara, where elephants, for millennia, have come to eat rich minerals on the cliffs. This was before they found the diamonds. Now, greedy black miners-poacher-mercenaries came and ruined everything!”

Synopsis: The elephants of Kumbayaa are noble and timeless, they do not have petty rivalries or jealousies. The children don’t play -- they follow their mothers, trunk on tail in a long noble line. They walk to face their death at the hands of the dirty, evil miners of Kumbayaa, who have been cobbled together by a dirty old mercenary, Leonardo, who lost everything when his wife left him, his heart dried out and he got on a plane with some French adventurers to Kenya, to lead a life of debauchery and khaki and greed in Africa .

As the elephants walk towards their annual licking ground, ancient drums warn, acacias tremble, all the world music of African indigenous deserts gathers momentum, as all the indigenous peoples of Africa, watching the movie, are sending desperate ancient musical text messages to the elephants, saying nooooo, nooooo. Don’t goooooooo.

But, alas, the elephants are timeless people. They trumpet their message back to the rest of the timeless people: “Ancient brothers, we will face our fate with dignity. *Continue on page 14:*



President Miller



Dean Kremens



Dr. Rickard

Amistad Lecture and Banquet



Dr. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza & Dr. Olusegun Sogunro

The Amistad Lecture and Banquet is organized yearly by the Amistad Committee, an affiliate of the Africana Center. Other than the first lecture which was held in November 2003, subsequent lectures and banquets have been held in February as part of the Black History Month activities. The Amistad Committee’s mission statement includes the following:

- To preserve and protect the history and legacy of the Amistad.
- To honor the experience of the captives aboard the Amistad to the universal aspirations for human dignity and freedom.
- To foster intellectual inquiry relating to the events of the Amistad through lecture series, workshops, research and community outreach activities.



Dr. Walton Brown-Foster

The Amistad saga which spawned 1839-1842 involved the illegal capturing of 53 Africans from Sierra-Leone to the Americas and their enslavement in Havana, Cuba. They were first shipped in the Tecora slave ship to the Americas with the aim of being transported in the Amistad ship to a plantation in Cuba. A bloody revolt ensued enroute with a



Students, faculty & committee members

demand by the captives to be taken back to Sierra-Leone. The Amistad ship was captured by the crew



Dr. Johnson, Dr. Harris, Dr. Emeagwali, Dr. Tuyambe, Ms. Richardson, Dr. Sogunro

of U. S. S. Washington off of Long Island, New York and re-directed to New London. Captives were taken to New Haven, tried in Hartford Courts, and finally set free to go back to Sierra-Leone, their homeland. During this critical time, some human rights activists in the state offered humanitarian assistance and gave helping hands to the survivors of this traumatic event.

Notably, the town of Farmington played a prominent role in the rehabilitation of the Amistad victims.

History has it that the Amistad events of 1839 and the aftermath, constituted the most famous landmark slavery case in the United States, setting the stage for freedom, social justice, and equality.

Between 2003 and 2009, the committee has successfully organized six lectures and four

banquets. Members of the Amistad Committee include Drs. Gloria Emeagwali (History), Katherine Harris (History), Beverly Johnson (English), Walton Brown-Foster (Political Science), and Olusegun Sogunro (Educational Leadership).

Should further information be required, please contact Dr. Olusegun Sogunro (Co-Chair) at 860- 832-2131 or Dr. Gloria Emeagwali (Co-Chair) at 860- 832-2815.



Dr. Zeleza & Dean Sakofs

Culture Shock

Africana Students Organization

By Ramatou Sangare, CCSU Senior, majoring in Communication

Throughout the night students and community members enjoyed themselves.

Every Spring , The Africana Students Organization (ASO) puts on our "Culture Shock Show" and this year's was really a spectacular event.

Members got together and wanted to incorporate the true "Africana" essence in this year's show, so this time they left the crowd not only entertained, but also informed about the different cultures that Africa has influenced and continues to influence.

The Culture Shock highlighted a tropical theme with warm colors and fanciful decorations, which were all inspired by the CCSU Design club. There were lit pineapple center pieces and scattered palm trees giving the illusion that you were on a tropical escape.

Food was provided by the CCSU catering company, Sodexo. Sodexo provided a menu that represented different cultures. There was everything from Indian samosas to fried plantains and pita bread with hummus.

The main events of the night were the performers. The Island Boys Band consisted of Steel Pan drumming, as well as Caribbean and African inspired dancers. GiGi Neama blew away the audience with her Egyptian inspired belly dancing moves. Rapper Decipher and poet Jelan represented the Hip Hop culture with their smooth and thought provoking lyrics. Latin band, Karibe Mambo and Salsa dancer Alisa from "Alisa's House of Salsa" got the crowd involved in a friendly dance competition. Last, but not least, was Husky Bhangra, who gave a traditional Indian inspired performance with a twist of hip hop.



"It was very professional," said William Forthergill from the Counseling and Wellness Center. "I was honestly impressed by the student effort that was put into the show, it really showed in the final product," says Gabbie French, a senior at CCSU

"I was very impressed and happy to see that the Culture Shock focused on the Diaspora. It was so diverse and that was the point. It was truly a Culture Shock!" says Masem Enyong, also a senior at CCSU.



The night finally came to an end with a fashion show, another aspect of the show put together by the Design club. "The fashion show was all about taking some traditional fabrics and creating a modern twist." says Tamika Harvey the President of the Design club.



Overall, the show was a huge success .If you missed it, there is always next Spring, so look out for ASO's next spectacular Culture Shock.



Deconstructing the Myth of Diversity & Multiculturalism in the United States

In and around the 15th and 16th century Christopher Columbus's 'discovery' and Hernan Cortez's massacre of the 'Indian peoples' firmly established among other Western traditional practices, the culture of Whiteism on Meso American soil. Whiteism, the visible and invisible power of 'color politics' dominates the 'global system' of international control. The subsequent 'invasions' and 'conquests' of indigenous peoples and their lands by the Whites of Europe furthered the cultural genocide which was to follow. Rationalized, it realized the actuation and established the tradition of white 'manifest destiny' and the 'right of conquest,' both theologically, theoretically and legally legitimating the 'brutal massacres of indigenous 'first nation peoples' and 'stealing' of their lands. This 'Crime against Humanity' was orchestrated by the 'pious and religious' sector of the British Protestants—the so-called 'dissidents' who thereafter firmly established a mono cultural hegemony on the continent which under laces 'covertly' the national behavior today. In fact their ideology and 'social inter-cultural practices' were hardly different from the 'rabble dissidents,' the morally and spiritually disadvantaged from the criminal havens and rum drenched docks of London and Liverpool.' In fact this was to be followed by the stock marketers from the city of London, who in fact formed the 'army of the settlers' subsequently. The American State grew out of this stock, establishing its constitutional and institutional framework, categorically entrenched a white social, cultural and societal tradition. Few Presidents in history have failed in alluding to those norms as the hallmark of 'our culture'. In fact the traditions and customs brought from the motherland have been complimented by a series of legislations which entrenched a firm foundation of a structurally white cultural state. State legislations especially in



Professor Chengiah Ragaven

the Deep South, the likes of Texas and Louisiana and several other states before and after the Civil War retained racial segregation and inequalities routinely in their social, political, legal and economic behavior and customarily have not failed in maintaining the traditions of their 'rich heritage' to this day. Whiteness is the 'manufactured' culture and not European-ness, mind you. The extraordinary civilization of Europe, like other older civilizations

from which it benefited, shared its values, norms and human behavior as one with other rich and extraordinary cultures of the world

Ultimately ultra-nationalism certainly remains ossified and ritualized in its relationship with the Lacanian 'others'-the indigenous cultures of the native land and the subsequent 'foreign cultures' and African peoples who were brought here to provide the labor. I use 'relationship' with people of color to mean Martin Heideggers' instrumental rationality' when

white races have to 'exist' among 'other nations'. Compassion and empathy and a deep feeling of love and warmth, which remain a gift of the 'gods,' have to be absent from any relationship with the 'others' because they do not 'belong to 'white tribal society'. The 'outsideness' of them in 'our' society is the hallmark of the 'other'. Why then, one might ask, did not the 'white' remain in 'Whiteland' whatever and wherever that may mean? One reason might be that the intra and inter-national wars in Europe which characterized its history since, even before the birth of Christ, remained ossified in its modern and post-modern forms. The First and Second World Wars are the classic examples of that 'civilization'. The other reason might be that 'war, pillage, conquest and violence' have been socialized into the cultural value system. Another reason might be the travelers' tales of the gold and other precious commodities in far away lands which might be easily 'got' from these 'simple and primitive people.' Kings and peasants were united in this quest and before long made their way to these foreign 'El Dorados'.

Enters Sir Francis Drake, Jan Van Riebeck, and the

Armada culture. There is Michner's extra-ordinary rendering of their behavior and the apt description of these 'representatives of Kings and Queens', as 'scoundrels and convicts' and other 'white trash' invading the peaceful and innocent world, armed with 'letters' from the Popes, Kings and Emperors 'legitimating' the invasions of ancestral Africa, Asia and Latin America and 'manufacturing the Master Race'. What becomes rather apparent in this 'power trajectory' is that 'white power' rationalizes and manifests itself as supreme racial identity, as Hanna Arendt writes in her 'Imperialism'. Marx's working masses in Europe, burdened by the yoke of 'class slavery' and long oppressed by their ruling elites, suddenly find an 'underclass' in the form of 'the barbarians and savages' across the seas- the idea rationalized by the white Christianity deeply entrenched and brainwashed wherever Whites live among people of color. Colonialism, localized Imperialism, was to follow and called on their white kith and kin to find the 'Eldorado' in 'conquered land' and the 'islands' where they would enjoy 'first class citizenship from 1652 to this day. Do we not envy the white South Africans ? Ask anyone who visits South Africa to this day and they will respond as to what a beautiful country it is- for them and the elites who live there. America is one such place. Why should we change the status quo. Do we not enjoy the 'baskaap' status so familiar in racist South Africa. We want to and do feel 'superior' not realizing that this is a legacy of a 'weak and disturbed mind' with its three hundred years of physical and rationalized 'violence' as its pathological and psychological strength. This is 'socialized psychology. The indigenous Indians will attest to that fact.

Some psychologist would argue that certain sectors of our society desperately need 'underdogs' to feel normal. The need for white status becomes axiomatic and almost natural - a subconscious state of being! What tragedy! For the victims of this system anyway.

Given this ossified and internalized racist structure modified and ritualized over 2000 years and glorified in American history for over hundreds of years and which remains central to our fundamental psyche what does diversity and multiculturalism do apart from overt grandstanding to a covert radicalized society. The cultural genocide and the attempts to 'eradicate' the very existence of the Indian peoples

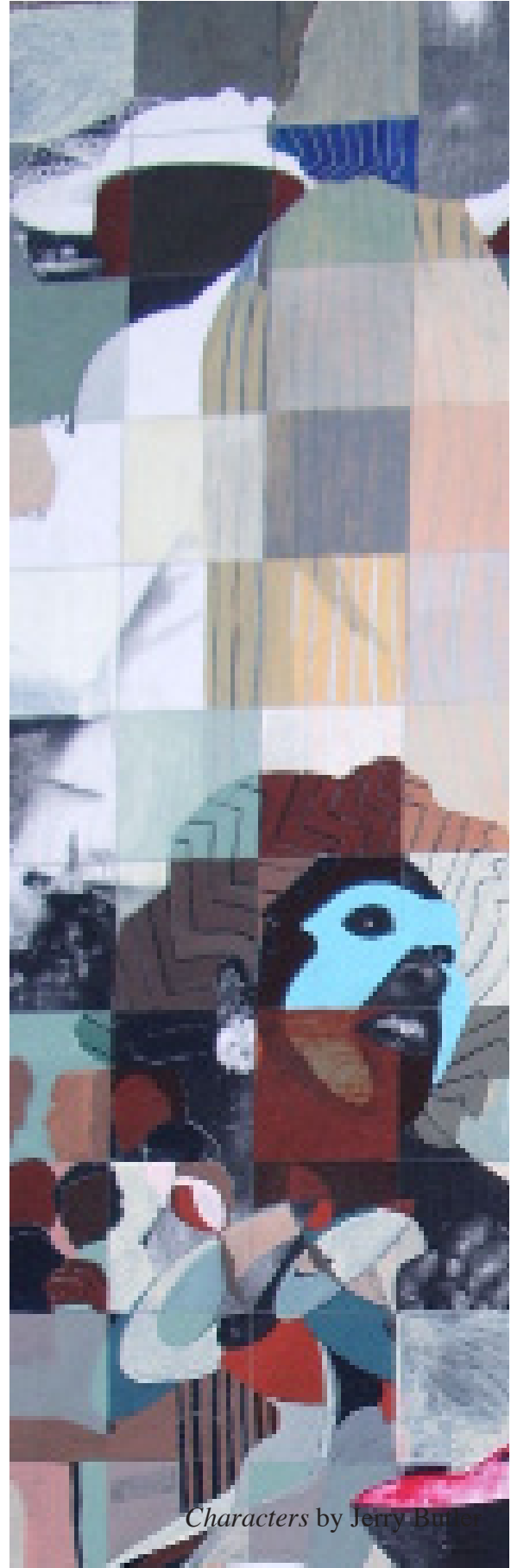
in this country informs us of the 'total strategy' of the Diversity and Multiculturalism in our society. In fact historical white privileges have given many their status and salary which they enjoy in the accompanying comfort in today's middle class life in America. Over the years intellectuals and spin doctors have been in the forefront in what Chomsky calls 'manufacturing consent' for the gatekeepers to mask the entrenched 'we are better than you' mentality in religion, culture, intellect and color. This 'ideology is normalized culturally, institutionally and individually. And yet it cannot be defended morally and therefore we find comfort in the market place 'morality,' "Public Relations," plastic smiles and 'false' politeness. It is Camus' 'Mask'. Whitewash racism with 'Diversity'- the latest 'buzzword.' From the 'melting pot' failure of assimilation and all the other 'rackets' the white 'gatekeepers' are now conning people with a 'name change'! It's cosmetic. Reminds me of the once upon a time when 'progressive people' protested against the 'reservations system' in South Africa, the gatekeepers quickly renamed it as 'Bantustans,' the so called 'cultural nations' ensuring the dominance of the white racist state'. When that was challenged the then government with the 'help' of the 'brilliant academics and scholars' came up with an even better 'name'- 'Separate Development', as if people of color with their ancient cultures which surpassed all else but the ruthlessness of militarism want to be 'developed' in the overarching mould of 'stolen wealth' and its discontents.

Since white supremacy is normative and entrenched in cultural psyche, how could this "Crime Against Humanity' be eradicated or at least 'injected' into the collective and individual consciousness? This is perhaps the most important question on the agenda of the people of color. The fight against racism has been a long and arduous one. As the Sri Lankan proverb aptly states! "You can wake up a sleeping man but it's difficult to wake up a man who is pretending to be asleep". The privilege of whiteism is so comfortable and 'normal' and the courage to challenge this so 'inconvenient' that one is tempted to 'flow with the crowd. What is required is great moral strength. Could the university have the strength to organize a whole month of talks, debates, plays, and engage the entire community in what is so paramount for 'education' to be and what it should have been! 'The Enlightenment of Body, Mind and Soul'. Will it be possible to engage

the students, staff and administration and indeed the entire university and the community to address this question? Can this university challenge other universities to follow suit? Are we that dedicated for racial justice and human dignity to be meaningful? Do we seriously understand the problematic outside the narrow mindset of ultra-nationalism? My fifty years of experiential racial, political, economic and cultural 'struggle' in this area makes me doubt the moral strengths of three hundred years or so of 'fundamentalist' mono-cultural educational institutions in general and universities in particular. The answer partly lies in the mental, psychosocial and radical change in people's minds and policies which will dismantle and re-organize the overarching State system and refashion the political apparatus of the country. That said, grassroots radical challenge of whiteism and its attendant institutional apparatus can also challenge the racial state. For starters, institutions of higher learning ought to be subject to a forensic audit of their institutional habits, specifically of their racist policy and behavior. Each individual in the administration must be held accountable. Staff and teachers, in this drama, must be answerable, made to be self reflective. The 'whitewashing' of complaints are said to be 'routine' in institutions. Complaints are 'filed for years'. Does anyone dare deny this! The 'we and I know it all' cultural and national mentality needs to be routinely challenged by people of color and their associates in all institutions of learning and otherwise. The personal costs are heavy and I know that too well in South Africa, England, Canada and the United States. Responsibility comes with norms and values, 'rights' notwithstanding. We students and academics are an arrogant lot, the exceptions are few. We rationalize that 'meetings', 'conferences' and 'ivory tower' will bring about the change. If the ideas are not translated 'to the streets' they mean little to our society 'suffering from an overload of information. Maybe this ought to be the first item on the agenda of any discussion desiring a scholarly, intellectual, educational and human society that will respect each individual as a gift to this world. A study of other civilizations where they are not 'whitewashed' may yield some answers but then has the society provided us with those skills?

Chengiah Ragaven teaches International Studies at CCSU. He was banned and placed under house arrest as a foremost student leader and a member of Mandela's African National Congress in the 1960's.

In exile, he was educated at London University, Sussex, Oxford, Cambridge and McGill.



Characters by Jerry Butler

“Can We Close the Achievement Gap?”

By

Khalil Harris-Abrahms

Over my 13 years, I've heard the question asked numerous times, “Can we close the achievement gap?” I believe we can and I would like to take a moment and share with you how I believe it can be done. Taking on the philosophy that less is more, I have three (3) basic areas that if improved/mastered could close the achievement gap or at the very least bring the two ends of the achievement gap close enough together to make a significant difference. Those areas are family support, the school/board of education and the student.

I believe the family support is the most important part of the solution. Having parents who play an active role in the student's academic life both inside the classroom and at home can set the tone. Using my own experience, I can remember back as far as the first grade my parents encouraging me to get good grades and study hard so I could go to college. And over the years I'd heard it so much that it wasn't a matter of if I was going to college but just where. And I've made that choice already also (Hampton University, my Dad & Mom's alma mater....I must carry on the family legacy). I have unfortunately been to some of my friend's homes where education wasn't a high priority and not taken very seriously. And when I asked some of my friends about going to college, they laugh at me or tell me college is a long way off. I have finally begun to understand what my father, a high school educator, has been telling me over the years. He said the reason some students are so unfocused when he gets them at the high school level is because of the lack of reinforcement in education and setting goals with them from an early age. I have been blessed to have parents who constantly remind me of the high expectations they have for me and the high expectations I should have for myself. As my parents have exposed me to numerous educational, cultural, athletic and religious extracurricular activities, they never fail to remind of how proud they are of me, which propels me to work even harder to not let them down.

The second part of the solution is the school/Board of Education. After talking to my father, an educator, and to some of my former teachers, I now realize that all schools are not created equal. If we want to close the achievement gap, there

needs to be a level playing field. All schools should have access to the same materials such as current textbooks, lab equipment, internet, clean classrooms and buildings, a safe learning environment, extracurricular activities, highly qualified teachers and administrators and a diverse student body. We will not be able to close the achievement gap as long as there are students who are using out dated textbooks or in schools where there aren't enough books for each student. Meanwhile their peers in affluent areas have the best materials, internet access in school and at home. It's hard to close the achievement gap when you attend a school that hasn't been kept up and isn't very inviting, doesn't have the facilities for any extracurricular afterschool activities and, much worse, is located in areas prone to violence. We can't close the achievement gap when the inner city school's teaching staff is made up of mostly underpaid uncertified substitute teachers. And the suburban schools are attracting the best teachers. And I believe we won't close the achievement gap until the classrooms become more diverse. I have been fortunate to go through the Montessori education system where they encourage diversity. Being in a diverse classroom/school has helped me learn about and appreciate all different types of ethnic groups besides my own. There are many students both in the urban and suburban schools who have never been in a classroom with any other race/ethnic group other than their own. And how can you appreciate others if you don't know them?

Last but not least is the student. Very simply put, you can have very supportive parents, attend the best schools available, but that student has to be motivated enough to take advantage of all the opportunities. I've always been baffled when my father shared stories of former students who seemingly had everything going for them and they chose a negative path. While there were other students who had a hard life growing up and still succeeded.

Even though there may be more to closing the achievement gap than family support, the school system and the student, I know it won't happen overnight. But at least these are some good starting points to get the ball rolling.

Khalil Harris Abrams attends Hartford Middle Magnet School. He is a member of Bethel A.M.E. and is an avid athlete. He plays basketball, football, and soccer.

Natural

By Robert Cooper, Freelance journalist and photographer

Believe that all Black women are beautiful, no matter what hairstyle they have. However, I think there is nothing more beautiful than a natural Black woman. Whether a Black woman has an afro, locks, braids, plaits, twists, or even a bald head, she will automatically capture my attention.

To me, a sister with a natural symbolizes her connection to her African roots along with a refusal to conform to what mainstream society deems as accepted beauty. The simple fact that she made a



conscious decision to wear a hairstyle that may not garner the attention of most Black men, and may cause trouble with employers, shows me that she is a strong-willed, independent woman.

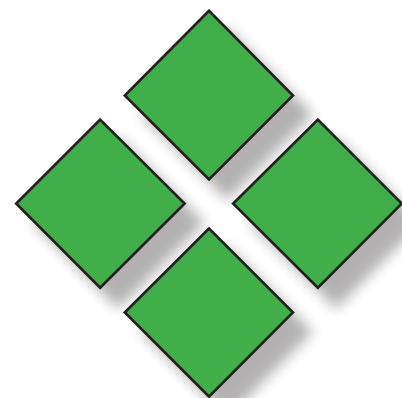
The roots of the natural hairstyle stems from the onset of the Black Power Movement of the 1960's and was inspired by the late South African singer Miriam Makeba. As Black people gained a sense of African pride, they began to don African inspired clothing, hairstyles and even adopted African names. This new love for their heritage was also reflected in music, movies, poetry, and art. This is the period of Black History that I am drawn to and fascinated by, which partially explains my attraction

to natural hairstyles.

Aside from my love for that era, a natural hairstyle is just a beautiful sight to behold and to touch. It tells a million stories about who we are. You can literally feel our history in our natural hair. You can feel our lineage to the mother continent before we were stolen, and dropped off at several countries throughout the globe. You can feel the hardships of slavery in a natural hairstyle. You can also feel the Black Power Movement, and the birth of knowledge of self during the 1960s and 1970s.

Finally, a natural hairstyle just looks good and is what we were born with. A sister with long flowing locks, is much more beautiful than one wearing a blond weave. An afro looks so much better than seeing the tracks glued to a woman's scalp. Why go through all of that? Why put yourself through so much for a look that wasn't given to you? Why try to emulate and look like people who have denied you of your own beauty for so long?

This is in no way a put-down of the many beautiful Black women who do not have natural hairstyles, but we need to acknowledge and show love to those sisters who are natural, as well as putting more emphasis on our own media outlets to show more Black women with naturals.



Psalms from the Heart (Part I)

A collection of Poems
Thoughts, Prayers, and Dreams
by K. C. Sankofa

The Evil One

*A Deer
Running wild and free...
Nothing to worry about
But the Evil One
Waiting
To Shoot?*

The Waterfront

*I look out the window and think of you.
I look out the window hoping to catch a view.
I look out the window and remember our past.
I look out the window and continue to ask.
I look out the window in silence and pray.
I look out the window and don't know what to say.
I look out the window as I write you this song
I look out the window and try to stay strong
I look out the window and try not to cry
I look out the window and ask the lord why?
I look out the window without a clue.
I look out of the window still feeling blue
I look out the window...
thinking of you.
"Emanuel"*

"...Psalms from the Heart..."

*These are my stories...These are my psalms
These are my songs...These are my loves
These are my memories...These are my days
These are my seasons...These are my years
These are my tears...These are my fears
These are the Psalms...The Psalms that come from the Heart*

A Prayer for Deborah

*Let me take a moment for you
Let me take a moment for a mother
Let me take a moment...
Let me take a moment to stop and ask why
Let me take a moment to look up to the sky
Let me take a moment...
And try not to cry
Let me take a moment...
Let me take a moment and light a candle
She would say
"The lord won't give us more than we can handle"*

*Let me take a moment of prayer
Let me say a little prayer
Let me take a moment for you
And say a prayer
A prayer
For My sweet Mother*

I am...?

*I love Hip-Hop
But I don't listen to rap
I follow the teachings of Christ,
But I am not a Christian
I pray five times daily to the East,
But I am not a Muslim
I practice yoga and meditation
But I am not a Buddhist
I believe in One God
But I am not Jewish
I believe in searching for the Truth
But I am not a Scientologist.
I believe in Education
But I am not a Teacher
I believe in being Free
But I don't believe in Freedom
I was born in America
And still Today? Not legally an American.
I am the Constitution
I am... a walking contradiction?
I am Hip-Hop
I am you
And
You are me!*

Mommy's a Doctor

*Mommy is you a doctor?
No, sweetie why?
Because I see you using needles.
Mommy, why do you use needles?
So, I can get away from my problems.
Am I a problem mommy?
No "Honey"..., now go to your room.
Mommy, can I come out of my room now?
mommy...Mommy!
I'm coming out of my room now...okay?
I'm out of my room now...
Here I come?
Mommy I see you
Mommy can you hear me?
Mommy? Mommy?
Are you ever coming back?*

To Become Man Enough:

The Journey of College Men

What is the purpose of a men's support group on a college campus?

Stop and think for a moment about the common views and perceptions about men and their failure to ask for directions



when they are lost. It is an accepted view that men don't ask for directions. Comedians make jokes about it, scholars write about it, and many women may complain about it. This concept may not be true of all men, but it is true for some men. The easiest way to help facilitate an understanding of the purpose of the Man Enough Support Group is to use the concept that men don't ask for directions when they are lost.

All men are on a journey, a journey called MANHOOD. For most men this journey is not easy. There are so many factors that can complicate the successful move toward his developmental destination. Imagine the thousands of men wondering in no-man's land trying to work through the maze called life. They are lost, but are they willing to ask for directions?

The journey of the lost man is like being off course and being afraid to admit that he does not know where he is. He moves around acting as if he knows where he is, but he doesn't. He tries to convince himself and others that he knows where he is, but he doesn't. He feels afraid and he begins to panic, but he can't say it and he can't show it. He is a MAN and being a man means he must know. He must always have an answer even when he doesn't have a clue.

As he tries to convince himself that he knows where he is, the more lost he becomes. He comforts himself by the devices he uses to maintain his sense of manhood. "Men have to be in control!" These are the same devices and vices

that keep him confused. He is trapped by his own masculine pride that leads him to "nowhere". He is cut off from all possible solutions because to admit is to acknowledge that he may not be the man that others perceive him to be or the man he has created himself to be in his journey towards manhood.

He finally begins to accept the lie about himself. He convinces himself that where he is may be where he always wanted to be. Silently he screams to himself, why doesn't anyone know? Why doesn't anyone care? Why doesn't anyone help me find my way? The weight of his masculine silence begins to crush him as he collides with other lost men. The cries from within him echo, "Am I Man Enough!" Am I man enough to admit that I am lost? Deep within his manly soul he yearns to be found, but his silence prevents him from accessing the necessary maps to help ease his pain. Does anyone hear his silent cry?

CCSU brothers, we hear you! Our response to the journey of men was the creation of the Man Enough Support Group. Being man enough is much more than the image. Manhood is about honesty, integrity, commitment, courage, and brotherhood.

The group was developed by Licensed Professional Counselor, William Fothergill (1989) who is an Assistant Counselor in the Counseling and Wellness Center. He wanted to respond to the questions:

- What could be done to support men through the challenges of being a male in a college community?
- What could be done to improve retention and graduation rates of male student, especially those underrepresented populations?

First, the answer was found in the mission of the Counseling and Wellness Center. The role of the Center is to support the "process of creating conditions and /or personal attributes which promote physical, intellectual, psychological and

[Continue on page 18:](#)

The saviour of Kumbayaa, continue from page 3

You will understand, you timeless noble peoples you.”

The red sun sinks, the elephants stand together in a circle, performing an ancient ritual -- silhouettes standing over Ixopo-at-Sunset, as the narrator (called Attenbara by the indigenous peoples) speaks in a deep voice to the world. Crickets scream disbelief.

In the blood-red sky of the morning, they look down from the craggy cliff, upon the squealing, money-seeking mercenaries, their shanty-towns and wild screaming markets, and the bad poacher/miner people -- and start to descend. The bad poacher/miner people turn and start to giggle gleefully, as bloodlust and money screams.

Flashback: The miner-people were once a good indigenous people, but became bad after eating of the fruit of school fees, plastic bowls and pocket radios. In 1890, a colonial conservationist, called Sir John -- or named by the elephants, PHRUUUUUU! The Saviour of Kumbayaa, a man with a deep and throbbing voice boomed with surround sound anger at the miner-people, “Leave, fools! Leave the gardens of Kumbayaa!”

The miner-people heard, they fell to the ground with fear and ran, leaving behind their ancient artefacts, their skins and hides, the rock paintings and happy evenings dancing nobly around the fire. As they fled, they could hear him booming, “What happened? He said, you were once such a noble and subsistence people. I helped you!”

The miner-people started farming cash-crops, trading, poaching. Then one day, Leonardo visited them and told them that their old homeland, Kumbayaa, was really King Solomon’s mines. Sir John’s Blood Red Diamond was found there !

In the early red dawn, the elephants descend.

Machetes and guns start to whir and pump, the elephant matriarch falls, and from the distance, we hear the clip clop sounds of a horse. It is Bob, riding cowboy-style, hair flying in the wind, shooting noble bullets, behind him, while on



other horses are: Bono, Angelina, Madonna and from cliffs and trees, all of Africa sings, Kumbayaa in all their languages, the chorus rises to the hills. ET stands up to dance, all the indigenous people are now in a chorus, a Ladysmith Black Mambazo chorus, as Bob Geldolf, played by Daniel Day-Lewis, confuses the dirty miner-people by throwing United Nations food parcels on the ground.

A giant, wild miner-person (Djimon Hounsou) leaps above Bob, about to bludgeon him with his cash register, and from the hills, Leonardo shouts the world, “Oh Lord! What have I doooooone!”



and shoots the irate cash-register-bearing leader of the Kumbayaa Miners Association.

All nature is silent, as Bob stands slowly and lifts the elephant queen in his arms. She puts a loving trunk around his neck. He walks up to the stone brick government office at the foot of the cliffs of Kumbayaa, and places it at the foot of the corrupt African politician, who opened

Kumbayaa for trade. Violins. The man stands, his head has bowed down in shame, for he had forgotten that he was a timeless and throbbing and noble person.



Sorrowful and caring Leonardo brings a Canadian company to Kumbayaa, to show how sustainable mining is possible. They save 300 elephants by investing in satellite phones, laptops, radios and a team of trackers to save the elephants.

So as not to further corrupt the miner-people, the Canadians will extract, mine and export the blood-red diamonds of Kumbayaa, and start a small fund to help the miner-people learn how to make bags out of tourist bottle-tops and recycled tinned food containers.

Leonardo will start a community empowerment organisation, and take a wife among them, and advise them to be true to themselves, and not deal with the nobility-polluting people who make world music records out of timeless peoples. Africa, again, has been saved from itself.

Foreign aid, or toxic enfeeblement?

By Okey Ndibe, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English,
Trinity College, Hartford CT



The very discourse of foreign aid to African nations strikes me as problematic. It is part of the legacy of Africa's subjection by foreign powers, especially those of Europe. In suggesting that financial and other bequests from European and other donor nations are a boost to Africa's economic and social development, we actually confront the sneaky use of language to perpetuate the legacy of imperialism.

Quite simply, Africa should not be dependent on foreign aid. Yes, there are a few countries in Africa that are impoverished, but the vast majority of the continent's nation-states are endowed with prodigious reserves of strategic natural resources – uranium, oil, coal, bauxite, gold, diamond, copper. If these resources are tapped for the benefit of African peoples, then it's difficult to imagine Africa as an impoverished area.

It's important to underscore that Africa's crises arise, in large part, from the continuing effects of imperialist conquest. Whilst African nations have, on paper, regained political autonomy, there's no question that the erstwhile colonizing powers, often in the guise of multinational corporations, continue to dictate the course of economic developments in much of Africa.

The scandal of the discourse of foreign aid, then, is that Africa is alleged to be the recipient of generous amounts of foreign aid. In actuality, African nations remain victims of their would-be benefactors. If anything, most African nations subsidize the extravagant lifestyles and habits of citizens of the world's wealthiest nations. Subtract the loot taken away from Africa – by oil corporations and other

[Continue on page 17](#)

End of an era continues from page 1:

in all subject areas. Dr. Mate-Kole received a grant to administer the Africana CONNCAS program for First Year Transitional Students in 2001. CONNCAS is a college credit-awarding program that prepares underprivileged students for college level work in the summer after high school graduation. Some of these students who were not prepared for admission prior to attending CONNCAS receive full admission to the university at the completion of the program.

Dr. Mate-Kole served as a strong pillar for members of the African-American community on campus. He provided leadership in all areas of the community's life. He was active in the New Britain chapter of the NAACP and built a strong link between the University and the greater Hartford minority community. He is a fearless activist scholar who is passionate about equity, justice and opportunities. As a result, a variety of issues outside of the classroom daily engaged his time and energies, especially those that pertain to the

well-being of the various segments of the minority community.

Dr. Mate-Kole consistently created opportunities for students to study abroad.

He initiated the first study abroad



program to Africa offered by Central. He helped provide a venue whereby students as well as faculty may learn about the world and appreciate African cultures.

Dr. Mate-Kole had and continues to have an active research agenda and publishes in peer-reviewed journals in the US and elsewhere. His work has received international recognition. He has supervised many graduate theses in psychology and international studies at CCSU and elsewhere. Several of his former students have completed doctoral degrees and are working in institutions in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Ghana. He has served as examiner of doctoral dissertations at the University of Hartford and University of Connecticut, and other institutions worldwide.

Individuals who contribute beyond normal expectations make great institutions, Dr. Charles Mate-Kole was one of such individuals. Dr. Mate-Kole has well-served this university and significantly helped to improve the curricula and quality of life for many students and faculty here. The CCSU community in general and the minority community in particular will sorely miss his dedicated and tireless leadership.

The members of the Center for Africana Studies collectively wish Dr. Charles Mate-Kole a very rewarding and fruitful retirement and look forward to his sage advice and support even in his retirement.



Michael J. Wilson

Letter from editor continues from page 1:

Organization. "Closing the Achievement Gap" is an award winning and heart warming essay written by Khalil Harris-Abrams, an eighth grader from Hartford, Connecticut. ♦ We would be remiss if we did not say farewell, best wishes and "Thank You" to our colleague, friend, and founding director of the CCSU Center for Africana Studies - Dr. Charles Mate-Kole, who retired from CCSU this year. He will be greatly missed, but his legacy will continue. Finally, I would like to end by saying "Thank You" for taking time to read our humble newsletter. It will inspire in you the zeal of Sojourner to seek and become the living example of Truth, Freedom, Justice, and Liberty.

Michael J. Wilson,

Guest Editor

(Mr. Wilson is currently Dean of Leadership Prep Academy, Springfield and Hartford)

Continue from page 15

corporate behemoths – and residents of the world’s richest regions (in Europe, Asia, and North America) are bound to witness a calamitous decline in their standards of living.

Sadly, most African nations lack the leaders – endowed with vision, purpose, and commitment – to pursue new terms of economic engagement with the big powers and their corporate raiders, and to employ imagination in redefining as well as transforming the lives of their people.

It’s important to stress that foreign investment in

Africa must be made in the spirit of partnership rather than from the putative perspective of superior philanthropy. If foreigners are to be engaged in the task of social reengineering in Africa, they must recognize that the agenda should be set by Africans themselves – not imposed from outside.

When foreign donors hijack the process of determining the priorities in Africa, they essentially reproduce patterns of imperial subjugation. And they become the problem, not part of the solution.



D EALING WITH THE NGOS INSUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.

Amadu Seidu

By the mid 80’s the Government of Ghana implemented a new policy approach in dealing with the NGOs. This new policy approach of partnership between donor and recipient countries, voluntary organizations, social service agencies, and non-profit health care providers were encouraged to liaise with District Assemblies under the Decentralization Program for project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This policy approach encouraged active community involvement in development and income generating activities to ensure sustainability. Community members became active rather than passive players in decision making regarding the development of their communities.

Again, 1983-91 saw an influx of foreign assistance to the State and NGOs through the Program of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment (PAMSCAD). The core areas addressed by this new policy approach included the following:

- I. Organization of development projects in which members of the community provide land, mobilize labor in general self-help effort.

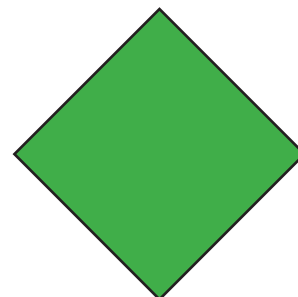
- II. Provision of health, education, shelter, portable water, feeder roads and other social services were top priority projects.



- III. Credit facilities through new rural banks with subsidized interest rates for small-scale industries and farmers under the direct supervision of the National

- IV. Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI).

The bottom- up rather than the customary top-down policy approach is a step in the right direction curtailing the operations of NGOs in Sub-Saharan Africa.



Man Enough: Continue from page 13

spiritual well-being for all members of the university community through counseling and prevention programs". The Center serves as a student retention and graduation agent. Secondly, the group will foster relationships between group participants where they can empower, support, and encourage each other towards personal and educational excellence. Finally, a collaborative approach must be implemented in order to meet the needs of our male student population - collaboration between departments and key individuals who are equally invested in the healthy development of college men. Co-facilitating and advising the group are Montez Johnson, Assistant Director of the Advising Center (1991/1994) and Director of Recruitment and Admissions, Lawrence Hall (1989). All three men, William, Larry, and Montez are alumni who attended CCSU during the later part of the 1980s. Harry Pacheco of Precollegiate and Access Services (EOP) later joined the number of dedicated faculty and staff working with the group's participants. The Man Enough Support Group is open to all undergraduate and graduate CCSU male students. Since its inception, the group has met an unaddressed need of a segment of the CCSU community. Black and Latino male students have overwhelmingly responded to the group. Data shows that these two populations of college ages men are most at risk of attrition and retention issues, and have low graduation rates. This may be why these men have actively responded to the supports offered by the group. National data shows that women are faring better as it relates to successful degree completion. (Schmidt, 2008; Tinto, 2002) When comparing the graduation rates of Central Connecticut State University's male students (especially men of color) to those of National numbers, CCSU male students are similarly lagging behind their female counterparts. "Women graduate at a rates of 11-14% higher than men."(Hosch, 2008) When examining the impact of health related factors, college men face risk of disease, injury, addiction, and death at significantly higher rates. (The Male Health Center, 2006; Courtenay, 1998) The extent of the impact of these health related factors may have a profound effect on overall male college student success. The group will focus on eleven key factors that have been shown to impact male college student retention and graduation.

- Expectation
- Competition

- Responsibility vs. Control
- Task Precision
- Time Management
- College Involvement
- Family Involvement
- Wellness
- Academic Status
- Drug/Binge Drinking
- Financial

The first eight factors are drawn from the College Success Factor Index and the remaining three factors are generated from research that identified factors that have proven to be significant to college success.

This support group was created to address

- Provide emotional, personal, and academic support through the use of faculty/staff and community based mentoring and advising.
- Improve health factors for men that will lead to enrollment sustainability.
- Confront barriers impeding retention and degree completion of male students on the CCSU campus.
- Provide a system of support that contributes to the improvement of retention and graduation rates of underrepresented populations.
- Identify and decrease risk factors impeding overall student success (e.g., disciplinary, alcohol, academic, etc.)
- Educate the CCSU community about issues effecting men on campus.
- Provide resources and service linkages to help student remain engaged and navigate the complexities of the college experience.

Why a men's support group? We have found that there is a need and so have many of our students. "I feel there is a great need for a positive environment of brotherhood on campus. As a student, I am bombarded with a variety of issues (financial constraints, relationship, self-identify, etc.) which has cause a great deals of impact upon me as an individual. These issues then ultimately

create long and short term effects (stress, anxiety, lack of motivation, and negative attitudes) upon my abilities as a student. I believe the Man Enough Support Group for student campus, touches on diverse subjects such as; self-purpose, character, lack of motivation, or it just gives students an opportunity to create discourse for issues in which they are struggling with or have lack of knowledge or concerns about. It's an excellent source of information, negative release, and a guide to self worth and identity, while building bonds with students and faculty for years to come.”

Mervin Brandy, Jr.

“The Men’s Group has been an outlet for me. It has been a place where I can share thoughts and ideas with others about different issues/challenges that men are faced with. The Men’s Group has helped me to be honest with myself, in my search to find myself, so that I can better myself. The group has also been very



The Bride and Mothers by Jerry Butler



Aaron Douglas

resourceful to me. It has led me to the Counseling and Wellness Center and also was a resource for Financial Aid. The group is orchestrated by a soft-spoken, intelligent and very intellectual man William

Fothergill of the Counseling and Wellness Center and he is backed by two knowledgeable and successful men Montez Johnson and Larry Hall. It’s about time CCSU offered a group like this one. It’s a necessity for male college students.”

Jajuan Arnold

“The Men’s Support Group at CCSU has given me a sense of purpose and direction that I didn’t have before - as a person. This group allows men to lend out wisdom and knowledge to others about life experiences that we’ve gone through in order to better each other’s lives and to learn from one another’s mistakes. My college life has become more fulfilling because I have a defined purpose for myself being here at Central. That purpose is to educate myself and others to make the college career experience a success. The Men’s Support Group offers services in various levels such as, academic,

financial, career services, and social skills. When I graduate from Central Connecticut State University this spring, I want to leave the university in a better place than I found it, and the Men’s Support Group will allow that opportunity to happen.”

Article submitted by
William C. Fothergill
Assistant Counselor
Counseling & Wellness Center

Designed by Jerry Butler

A Relief Benefit for Haiti

Unity is Strength



Central Connecticut State University

Wednesday, March 17th, 2010

Reception

Time: 5 ☐ 7 pm

Place: Alumni Hall,

Student Center

Tickets: \$5 dollars (limited)

Concert

Time: 7 ☐ 11 pm

Place: Torp Theatre,

Davidson Hall

Tickets: \$5 dollars

The goal of this initiative is to organize a campus and community wide benefit to support relief aid to Haiti. We are working on behalf of the larger CCSU & New Britain communities to support the Haitian earthquake survivors through fundraising and by educating the larger society about the culture of Haitian people, both within the community and abroad.

All proceeds of tickets and all other donations will go to AmeriCares, a Connecticut - based nonprofit disaster relief and humanitarian aid organization.