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The Official Student Newspaper of Prairie View A&M University

THE PANTHER

panther@pvamu.edu · Volume 78, Issue 17 · February 16, 2001

We towed you!



Photos by Creighton Holub

An illegally parked car is removed from campus by an employee of All Star Services towing company. Earlier this semester, The Panther reported that students' cars would be towed if they were parked in reserved spaces or tow away zones.

Scholarship pageant application deadline extended

By Sheleah Hughes
Editor-in-Chief

In the next couple of months, several young ladies will grace the stage of the Billy J. Nicks fieldhouse in hopes of becoming the next Miss Prairie View. That is if more applications are returned.

Denise Simmons, coordinator of the pageant, has rescheduled the application deadline again.

The first two deadlines did not return enough applications for the pageant, which is scheduled for April 18, to be considered entertaining.

Instead of canceling the pageant, staff of the Office of Student Activities and Leadership decided to extend

the deadline.

The first deadline of Jan. 26 resulted in only one returned application.

The next deadline of Feb. 9 only resulted in two more.

From there a decision was made to further extend the application deadline to Feb. 23.

"At this time we (OSAL) are remaining optimistic and positive about attracting additional young ladies to participate in the pageant," said Simmons. "Regardless of the number of contestants, there will be a pageant on its scheduled date."

An exact reason has not been named as to why so few people are interested in competing in this year's pageant, but Simmons and others don't believe it is a lack of

Photo courtesy of the OSAL



Kimberly Pierson, Miss Prairie View 2000-2001 will give up her crown at this year's pageant scheduled for April 18.

interest or fear.

"It seems as though many of the young ladies who are interested in competing, had a disappointing fall semester," said Simmons, who has been the director of the

pageant since 1997. "Most of them have a grade point average that falls right below the required 3.0, but that is just not enough,"

The pageant requires those interested in competing for the title to have a minimum 3.0 gpa for scholarship that is given as one of the prizes. "Both the scholarships for the winners of the Mr. and Miss Prairie View A&M scholarship pageants come from scholarship funds in which a student must maintain a 3.0 grade point average," said Simmons.

The potential candidates are required to sign a contract before entering the competition that requires that they are a single female between the ages of 18 to 26-years-old, have not had any children, be classified as a ris-

ing junior or senior and be in good standing with the university.

An application fee of \$250 is also used to supplement the cost of producing the pageant.

Problems in finding qualified contestants for a pageant are not only familiar to this pageant, but to others as well.

Last year's Mr. Prairie View pageant, which was rescheduled due to lack of interested candidates and other technicalities, included new rules that clouded the minds of interested candidates who were unaware of the requirements for the pageant, including a 3.0 gpa.

The production was an abbreviated version of past performances and only included three contestants.

In This Issue

Royalty heads NAACP... see Page 5

PV football recruits See Page 6

The return of 20's... see Page 7

•World•

AIDS activist hospitalized

Johannesburg, S. Africa

AP- South Africa's youngest AIDS activist, Nkosi Johnson, has been admitted to the hospital in critical condition, his adoptive mother said.

Nkosi, 12, contracted AIDS from his mother, who died in April 1997. He is South Africa's longest known surviving child AIDS victim.

Nkosi promoted the cause of young HIV and AIDS sufferers and spoke openly about the disease, which remains heavily stigmatized in South Africa, even though about 10 percent of the population is infected.

Fight for marine

Tokyo, Japan

AP- U.S. military authorities on Okinawa refused to hand over to Japanese police a Marine wanted on suspicion of arson, police said.

Capt. Douglas Powell, a spokesman for the U.S. Marines on Okinawa, said he was "not ready to respond," but would comment later.

Prefectural police said that they obtained an arrest warrant for Kurt K. Billie, 23, a Marine stationed at Camp Hansen whom they suspect in two arson fires last month. Japanese police gave his rank as private first class. They had no hometown for him.

Dollar goes up, stock falls

Tokyo, Japan

AP- The U.S. dollar traded higher Tuesday against the yen while Tokyo stocks slipped.

The dollar bought 117.22 yen by late afternoon, up 0.64 yen from Friday in Tokyo but below its late level of 117.55 yen on Monday in New York trading.

The dollar held onto most of the gains it chalked up against the yen after the Bank of Japan announced plans to lower its official discount rate.

General convicted

Bogota, Columbia

AP- In the first such verdict against a top Columbian officer in a human rights case, a former army general was convicted for failing to defend a town during a 1997 killing spree by a right-waving paramilitary death squad.

Gen. Jaime Humberto Usategui, handed a 40-month sentence by a military tribunal in the massacre of at least 22 people in the southern town of Mapiripan.

•National•

Teacher suspect in prescription drugs

Roy, Utah

AP- A Roy High School teacher is suspected of obtaining drugs from students.

Lt. Greg Whinham said the suspect has not been charged but was expected to be arrested.

The teacher has been placed on administrative leave. Whinham said the investigators have conducted interviews with as many as two dozen witnesses about actions of the 39-year-old teacher during the past two weeks.

Taggart said the district is awaiting results of the police investigation before taking further action.

Player gets second chance

Milwaukee, WI

AP- Mark Chmura's agent says his client is a low risk for any team willing to give the former Green Bay Packers tight end a second chance.

"He's the last guy you'd have a problem with on your team," Eric Metz said.

Chmura was acquitted earlier this month of charges he enticed and sexually assaulted a 17-year-old former baby sitter for his children at a drunken party last year.

Genius discovers new findings

Kenosha, WI

AP- The February edition of Physical Review, a top physics journal in the United States, contains a paper by a former University of Wisconsin-Parkside undergraduate about his research and new findings on a complicated equation.

Jerry Praeger's accomplishment is rare, said Jerry Schmidt, a physics professor at the college who advised Praeger.

Praeger developed an equation that's kind of a mathematical Swiss army knife, an all-purpose tool that can be applied in many fields.

Hilton head slaying

Hilton Head Island, S.C.

AP- One of two men accused in the slaying of a Lowcountry man nearly two years ago has pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter and has agreed to testify against his co-defendant.

Robert Alan Fields, 34, pleaded guilty in the shooting death of 38-year-old Brian Williams in September 1999. Fields was assured a 15-year prison sentence.

•Regional•

Certificate pick-up

Prairie View, Texas

The following students have been elected to Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges for the academic year 2000-2001: Devin Bailey, Brion Burdet, Annie Butler, Kerri-Ann Coombs, Sasha Chandler, Lawanda Fanner, Jessica Ferguson, Saquinthea Gomez, Trina Hester, Donna Johnson, Valencia Johnson, Eric Jones, Jayhea Matthews, Michelle Moore, Steven Oliver, Thomas Price, Stacy Roberson, Natasha Robinson, Ronda Tomlinson, Lover Woods, and Charla Wright.

These students need to call ext. 2132, or come by Drew Hall, room 23 to pick up certificates.

State reports losses

Austin, Texas

AP- Almost \$750 million in investment fund losses for the University of Texas and Texas A&M University systems resulted from plunging stock markets over a three-month period, officials say.

Despite shortfalls over the period ending Nov. 30, 2000, investment strategists say they propose no significant changes.

Results show the permanent fund's value dropped about \$800 million in the quarter to about \$7.7 billion, although that includes \$317 million disbursed to the two universities. The investment lost was \$508.2 million.

Change in orbit

Houston, Texas

AP- A new set of gyroscopes took over control of the international space station's orientation in orbit on Tuesday as NASA tested the equipment that will allow a huge savings in thruster fuel.

The motion-control devices went into operation one day after astronauts from the space shuttle Atlantis installed a new shutter that allows the station crew to look out through a state-of-the-art window.

Crash kills two

Pampa, Texas

AP- Two people were killed early Tuesday when their plane crashed near the Perry LeFors Airport in the Texas Panhandle.

The wreckage was located less than one mile east of the airport's runway, according to The Pampa News.

The couple is believed to have traveled to Albuquerque so they could visit the Veterans Affairs hospital there.

Calendar of events

16 Friday

Pick up your copy of The Panther

17-18 Sat./Sun.

Black History Party, Alumni, Prairie View, TX, 9 p.m.
Family Reunion, UC, Prairie View, TX, 12 p.m.

19 Monday

Organ Donor Awareness, Alumni, 9 a.m.
Black History Week Seminar, Phase III Clubhouse, Prairie View, TX, 7 p.m.
Black History Program Concert, Hobart Taylor, Prairie View, 7p.m.

20 Tuesday

Panther Meeting, Drew Hall suite 23, Prairie View, TX, 5:30 p.m.
Organ Donor Awareness, Alumni, 9 a.m.
How to Design a Web Page, Banks rm. 200, Prairie View, TX, 7p.m.
Date Rate- The Battle of the Sexes, New Science Bldg. rm 0A104, Prairie View, 7p.m.
I'm My Brothers Keeper Seminar, Banks rm. 204, Prairie View, TX, 7p.m.

21 Wednesday

Organ Donor Awareness, Alumni, 9 a.m.
SGA Senate and General meeting, Admin. Bldg., Prairie View, TX, 5 p.m.
Black History Celebration, Student Park, Prairie View, TX, 6 p.m.
Touch of Class Seminar, Harrington Science rm. 121, Prairie View, TX 7 p.m.

22 Thursday

Ice Cream Social, Alumni, Prairie View, TX, 5 p.m.
Mr. and Miss BSM Pageant, All Faiths Chapel, Prairie View, TX, 6 p.m.

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Houston Chronicle
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Sat.: 8:00 a.m.-3:00p.m.

Former president's decision questioned



By Sheleah Hughes
Editor-in-Chief

He made a mistake. He is not in office any more, so can we please leave him and his decisions alone?

On his last day in office President Bill Clinton granted pardons to various people including Marc Rich, a

fugitive financier associated with the brokerage house Paine and Webber.

Supposedly, Rich, a billionaire trader, denounced his citizenship in the United States after being tried and indicted for wire fraud, racketeering, income tax evasion and violating a trade embargo to Iran.

Many people including the Senate Judiciary Committee and the government reform committee have begun questioning the reasonings behind Clinton's decision.

But why? Clinton was elected to See PARDONS on Page 9

Sometimes the news isn't so nice



By Kalyn L. Bullock
Managing Editor

I don't know how many people who read The Panther, actually read page two, the briefs page, but for those who do I wonder if you readers notice that the majority of the news printed pertains to drugs, sex, killing, and convicts.

Maybe we, as the campus newspaper, should be addressing more political issues, but when you think about it who wants a paper full of poli-

tics? No, The Panther is not a "trash" paper.

Our goal is to reach out to the student body and alert them with news that affects them and we are doing that by printing all of that "gruesome, not so nice" news.

Have you taken a look at the world around us? A man recently made an attempt to assassinate newly-elected President George W. Bush, another man killed himself and three of his children, and even here in Waller County, a man killed his live-in girlfriend.

We can't hide from these violent acts that are happening around us. And, just so happens that many times these issues seem to be more interesting and outweigh the more political and other worldly news stories.

The Panther Staff

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Tina M. Ellis : Entertainment Editor
Lee Tillman : Assistant Entertainment Editor
Quincy Higgins : Graphic Designer

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Love tips will allow couples to last longer

With Valentine's day 2001 memories lingering fresh in students' minds, the PEACE project has taken a moment to reflect on tips for developing successful love relationships.

Project volunteer Jabber Gordon proposes the following relationship rules which he claims to have learned "the hard way."

1. Don't settle for anyone who can't or won't make you happy.

Too often people stick with a partner because of his or her money, car or status.

In return, people often sacrifice their self-esteem, as well as their physical and emotional well-being.

Money and material things are external. Love is based on intangibles - trust, respect, honesty, and passion.

2. You can't change anyone.

This rule is very important. A person will only change when he or she is ready. Believing that you can change someone's negative, hurtful, illegal or offensive behavior is a waste of time.

Many people spend years of misery and heartache trying, but with no success.

3. When dating someone, if you can't see a long term relationship with that person, disengage yourself.

A relationship should not be "smoke and mirrors."

At the point you realize the person you have been dating is not your soul mate, get out as quickly as possible.

Don't be pressured into an unwanted commitment... and remember, telling someone you "just want to be friends" gives false hope and may encourage unwanted be-

havior like annoying phone calls or unplanned visits.

4. A healthy love relationship consists of two people.

Keep other people out of your business.

Gossiping about your relationship to girlfriends or homeboys leads to trouble. People's petty jealousy won't let them rest until a good relationship goes sour.

5. Be honest.

Don't pretend to be someone you are not. It will always catch up to you.

If you mess up, then fess up! Apologize sincerely and don't repeat the behavior again.

Sylvia Cedillo, PEACE Project Director
Special to the Panther

Correction

In the article titled "Students remembered on anniversary of accident" on the front page of the Feb. 9, 2001 issue Rashad Shelton, of Raywood, TX was unintentionally left out of the article.

He was an athlete who was injured in the van accident on Feb. 10 last year.

The driver of the van lost control of the van while the team was traveling to a track meet in Pine Bluff Arkansas.

Dear Editor,

There are few things that should have also been

added to the story (Foreign languages omitted from spring schedule) on the front page of the Feb. 9 last week's issue.

English is a second language for all non native English-speakers in the United States.

Besides, English, I feel that there is currently only one other second language here, and that is Spanish.

All other languages taught could be thought of as "foreign" or "world" languages. to give you an idea of how Spanish as opposed to all

other languages has mushroomed.

Here are the results of a recent Modern Language Association study: two million students take foreign languages on the college level in the United States of America.

55 percent of those students take Spanish and 45 percent take one of the other 53 languages offered.

Sincerely,
Dr. John Sullivan,
Associate Professor and coordinator of Foreign Languages and Director of the Multimedia Language Labortory

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New campus organization dedicated to improving life

By Steve Hall
Panther Staff

For more than 90 years, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has been built on the individual and collective courage of thousands of people.

People of all races, nationalities and religious denominations were united on the premise all men and women are created equally.

The commitment of the NAACP to remove all barriers of racial discrimination through democratic processes has made it the nation's oldest, largest, and strongest civil rights organization.

The organization is a network of more than 2,200 affiliates and the campus of Prairie View has become one of the as it now has a NAACP chapter.

Sherisa Pittman, Miss Prairie View 1999-2000, decided as part of her reigning platform, to strengthen the NAACP chapter in hopes that it would eventually grow on the campus and the surrounding communities.

"It is very important to have a chapter on every black college campus to keep people abreast a the issues that we are faced with," said Pittman.

Panther Meetings
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PARDONS from Page 3

He owes not one person an explanation for his actions.

In 1974, President Gerald Ford granted Richard Nixon a pardon. And later that same decade Jimmy Carter granted a pardon to Vietnam War Draft evaders in 1977.

Many people have begun speculating that Clinton's pardon of Marc Rich was a favor for Jack Quinn, Rich's lawyer and former White House counsel.

A former fund-raiser for the democratic party also is supposedly Rich's ex-wife. She supposedly steered nearly \$1 million to the democratic party, money to the Clinton library and furnishings for the family's new home.

After pleading the fifth amendment, she is now required to turn over all of her financial records as well as any records of contributions to the Clinton library.

Earlier this month senators raised the idea that President Clinton could be impeached for his actions.

Again, I ask why? The only person with good sense, which is ironic and a topic I will not go into, is newly elected President George W. Bush who continues to hope that the situation will be in the past.

It is in the past; we should be concentrating on matters that matter to us now.

It is a complete insult for us to question and even believe that foul play would be involved with the pardons President Clinton

granted.

He owes not one person an explanation for his actions.

In 1974, President Gerald Ford granted Richard Nixon a pardon.

And later that same decade Jimmy Carter granted a pardon to Vietnam War Draft evaders in 1977.

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I am speechless



By Ryan McGinty
Sports Editor

I opened the newspaper the other day and I almost fell out when I saw the 2001 recruiting class from Prairie View A&M University.

Even though the recruits were listed in the bottom right hand corner of the writer's weekly column, I was still amazed that they were announced. To my knowledge, the last recruiting class announced at Prairie View was during Greg Johnson's tenure back in 1998.

What made my eyes jump out was that Prairie View actually signed two guys from the Waller area. I don't know how it happened, but I guess all that ranting and raving I put in my past columns finally paid off.

I have said all along the team should always recruit one player from each of the local schools because it can go a long way in fan support.

When I funneled the information about our signees to another interested fans, they too jumped with joy when they saw the recruits. The first thing they mentioned was the Waller signees. Was this the missing piece in the puzzle for Prairie View football?

During a recent interview with Coach Dorsey, he seems interested in any player who has the potential to help the program regardless of color. That is the attitude I like.

The player could be green, yellow or pink for all I care as long as they produce for the program and in the classroom, that is the bottom line.

When Dorsey said the future looks bright at last summer's media tour, people laughed.

I guess it is time to pull out the shades.

Fill 'er up

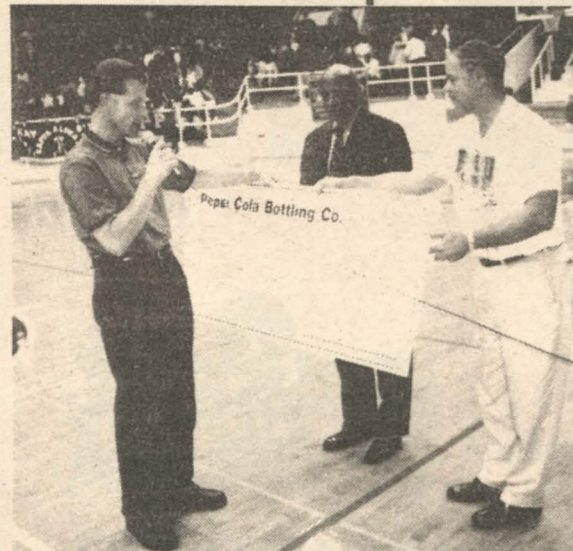


Photo by Creighton Hollob

President Charles Hines and Silas Collins accept a \$100,000 check from Pepsi Cola Bottling Co. at halftime during the TSU game last week.

Panthers announce new football recruits

By Ryan McGinty
Sports Editor

The Prairie View A&M Panther football team began preparations for the upcoming season with the addition of seven football recruits.

Second-year head coach Larry Dorsey's first recruiting class includes several players from the local area and one out of state player. He also plans to sign several more athletes within the upcoming weeks to bolster the class.

The players who signed within the last week include Billy Pettaway (6-4, 290) of Alvin, Texas, Damien Horton (6-3, 320) of Timpson, Texas, defensive lineman/tight end Ronnie Nunn (6-3, 320) of Ranger Junior College, linebacker Ben Mingle (6-3, 240) of Waller, kicker Charles McCall (6-1, 190) of Englewood, Colo., receiver/defensive back Derrick Williams of Dallas Samuell High.

Coach Dorsey is very excited about the incoming class and he also said that these players have a chance to contribute right away to the program with hard work.

"We definitely feel great about the quality and ability of the student athletes we've signed so far," Dorsey said.

"These players can be impact players next year with some hard work and dedication."

Although Dorsey did not want to single out an individual recruits, he did mention that the offensive and defensive line recruits will be the team's primary points of emphasis from this point on.

"We are targeting big guys as of now," he said.

"Building our offensive and

defensive lines are our main priority."

The players who could have an immediate impact on the program should be Mingle and McGill.

According to *Texas Football*, Mingle, who is the

2001 Prairie View A&M Football Recruits

Billy Pettaway	OL	Alvin
Damien Horton	OL	Timpson
Ronnie Nunn	TE-DL	JUCO
Ben Mingle	LB	Waller
Charles McCall	K	Colorado
Stephen McGill	P/QB	Dallas
Derrick Williams	R/DB	Waller

first Waller High player to sign with Prairie View in years, was a very important asset for Waller while playing defensive line and McGill averaged 38 yards per punt in high school.

Although low on numbers, Dorsey says the quality of the athletes makes up for it.

"With a very limited number of scholarships, the staff has worked hard to secure those student-athletes that can be important players for us next year."

The 2001 schedule, which has not been finalized yet, appears to be similar to the Panther's 2000 schedule, which featured such powers as Northern Iowa and McNeese State.

The Panthers pick up SWAC power Jackson State on their schedule and add Texas A&M-Kingsville and former SWAC power Paul Quinn.

The Paul Quinn game is the most intriguing.

The school is fielding a football program for the first time in years.

In addition, Dorsey's ex-boss, the legendary Archie Coolie is Paul Quinn's coach.

SPORTS

SWAC Basketball

Men

Alabama State.....	10-2
Alabama A&M.....	9-3
Miss Valley.....	9-4
Alcorn.....	9-4
Southern.....	6-7
Grambling.....	6-7
Jackson.....	5-8
Texas Southern.....	4-8
Prairie View.....	3-9
Pine Bluff.....	2-11

Women

Alabama State.....	11-1
Alcorn.....	11-2
Southern.....	9-3
Grambling.....	8-5
PV.....	6-5
TSU.....	5-7
AAMU.....	5-7
Jackson St.....	5-8
Pine Bluff.....	2-11
Miss. Valley.....	0-13

Panther of the Week

Lewis Edmonson

6' 2" 180 lb
The Caldwell, Texas native has been the men's track team top hurdler this past semester with several first place finishes in the last few meets.

Box Scores

Softball

Houston Baptist	8 - 5
Prairie View	0 - 3

Baseball

McNeese State	12-12
Prairie View	0-2

X marks the spot!

In rap music the West Coast is known for a lot of things like c-walking, popping your collar, hydraulics, gang banging, and beats that actually make you bob you head. But lyrics were usually left up to the New Yorkers. Evidently no one ever told this to Xzibit or maybe they did and that's why he tries so hard.

On his third LP titled *Restless*, Mr. X to the Z is determined to let us know that the words "West Coast Hip Hop" is not a contradiction of terms.

For those who didn't know that this was his third album, you probably heard him first alongside Snoop Dogg on the track "B-Please." This song, incidentally, produced a three-fold effect. First, it got Snoop his credibility back. Second, it reunited Dr. Dre with Snoop. And third, it highlighted a

young upstart by the name of Xzibit.

Though Dre is the executive producer of *Restless*, he only laid tracks for 3 of the 16 songs. Be that as it may, *Restless* doesn't lose any weight on the production side of things.

The West Coast has also been accused of monotonous song substance by sticking to the three g's - guns, girls and gunja.

Xzibit breaks the mold once again by touching on a number of topics from his old school dedication to KRS-ONE on "The Kenny Parker Show 2001" to the hilarious "FN You Right..."

"Sorry I'm Away So Much" is dedicated to his 4-1/2 old son and his incarcerated younger brother, neither of when he gets see as often as he'd like. By the way, he doesn't get to see his son because he's touring with

Dre, not because he's a dead-beat dad just in case you were wondering.

Don't be fooled, though. Xzibit is no softy. There's plenty of head-busting to go around. The line, "Only the kid from the 6th Sense can see you," is witness to that.

Though X is a lyrical heavyweight, he does manage to get outshined by Eminem on the Em-produced track "Don't Approach Me."

Restless is more than a satisfactory recording, but it's noticeable to anyone that admires his work that he can do even better. Maybe he'll give it to us in 2002. But until then, in the words of West Side Connection, "Bow Down."

By Lee Tillman
Asst. Entertainment Editor

To all 20 Questions Fans,
My deepest apologies go out to all of you for the missing questions in last week's issue. It really wasn't my fault. We had limited space and too many full-page ads. Sorry for the inconvenience. I hope this week's questions are to your liking.

-Tina M. Ellis
Entertainment Editor

20 Questions

- Why weren't there any 20 Questions in the last issue?
- Did you read the newspaper anyway?
- Who's the guy that proposed to his girlfriend at the Alumni Valentine's ball?
- What will the Kappas and Sigmas play to squash their differences this year...hockey?
- What did you have at Alumni today: chicken, steak, or chicken fried steak?
- What ever happened to the Michigan Club?
- How many of you know someone who still has a Southside fade?
- Who has the number to the new Transit bus?
- How many of you take the bus to Katy Mills on Friday afternoon to get your new club clothes?
- If the Village isn't school property, why do the same school rules apply?
- Do people still go home every weekend?
- How many of you have a special someone on campus and at home?
- Who was the lonely Alpha walking around on Valentine's Day with a "Please Hug Me" sign?
- When is Williams Chicken going to open?
- And why are the Dallas/Ft. Worth people feenin' for it?
- Did you know Alumni Hall will be torn down soon?
- Where will we eat?
- Does anybody ever call that number at the bottom of fliers for students needing "special assistance"?
- And who sits around all day waiting for them to call?
- What do you think?

We want to know what you think. Please submit any questions you may have to The Panther, Suite 23 Drew Hall. Questions are printed at the discretion of The Panther.



The Answers

Weekly Update for Freshmen

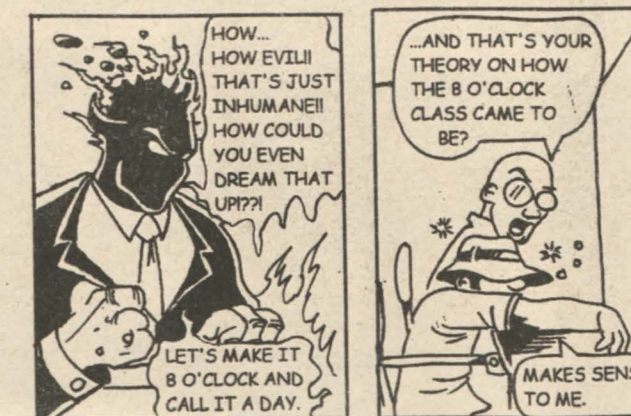
University College thanks all of our residence hall staff for the superb job they do 24/7!!



Did you know all of these things are happening at UC this week?

- Bldg. #38 is having a Family Reunion BBQ for residents and their families on Sunday, Feb. 18th
- Wednesday, Feb. 21st is International Residence Hall Staff Recognition Day
- Frank Jackson will present "Black History-Our Heritage" at 6:30 PM on Feb. 21st in the UC Theatre
- UC will host a Black History Fair, "The Souls of Black Folks, Then and Now" at the UC Freshmen Complex on Thursday, Feb. 22nd.
- Bldg. #42 and Ms. Kirsten Johnson's General Studies Class will be attending "Lest We Forget," a play on Black History at the Shrine of the Black Madonna on Saturday, Feb. 24th.

"JUST CHILLIN'" by: Quincy Higgins



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What's in 'The Star-Spangled Banner' for the African Diaspora

By Eric Gaither
Special to the Panther

disposability of hirelings and slaves:

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore that the havoc of war and the battle's confusion a home and a country should leave us no more? Their blood has wiped out their foul footsteps pollution. No refuge could save the hireling and slave from the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave: And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Thinking back to the first (more commonly known and sung) stanza of "The Star-Spangled Banner," where Key has written, "our flag was still there," we know after reading the third stanza that slaves (Africans, Blacks) could not have been part of the inclusive "our," because, in addition to having been property in the

colonies, within the poem, Key distinguishes the slaves in search of "refuge" from the "we" present at the "twilight's last gleaming"

No matter how many times Whitney Houston profusely sweats in her auburn wig and sings in a red, white, and blue jumpsuit, waving her white handkerchief, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is not a Black song.

No matter how many times the phenomenal guitarist Jimi Hendrix is shown in MTV re-runs, plucking and teething his lively (and off-the-hizzook) acoustic version of "In Defense of Fort McHenry," the infamous-poem-adopted-as-national-anthem-of-these-United-States-of-America-in-1931, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is not a Black song.

If the most soulful, blackest Black person you know wails it, line-by-heart-

aching-line, with flawless Sunday riffs, sung from the depths of an internal abyss, upwelling and overflowing with emotion, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is not a Black song.

In 2001, with the aisle dance of sterile poetic possession behind us, it is time (Black people) to cast off the soulless song, put down the powerless poem, and "give up the ghost."

Across the threshold of the new millennium, it is imperative that we carry the 40,000-50,000 years of African lyrical and instrumental legacy, which anchor and nurture our magnanimously awesome rhythmic contribution to the history of civilization.

If we must leap to our feet at the beckoning of a note, or heed the call of patriotism through poetry or song, let it be done within the dignity of the uncompromising and genuine language of the people.

If we must utter sound,

let it be a superfluously bold lyrical declaration of the Black past, present, and prognosis.

As I sit comfortably and respectfully in my seat, at the next playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner," it will be with the anticipation of standing *only* for the words of the deceased harbingers James Weldon Johnson, Nicolas Guillén, Langston Hughes — John Henrik Clarke; the matriarchal Maya Angelou; the vibrantly existent Ntozake Shange; the silently fierce Edwidge Danticat; the spiritual visionary Stevie Wonder; the eloquent Susana Baca; the wounded sparrow Mary J. Blige; the youthful urban prophets Nas, Mos Def, KRS One, Lauryn Hill, Erykah Badu, or Jill Scott.

I don't have a problem waiting.

I figure if most people will stand up for *anything*. I can sit waiting for *something*.



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