

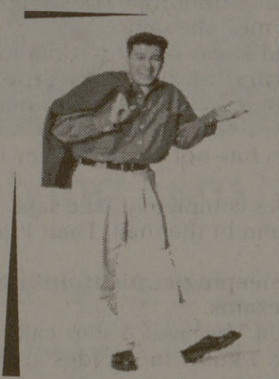
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AGGIELIFE

Kwanzaa: holiday bridges cultural gaps

Continued from Page 3

Kwanzaa celebration. "The women got together, and, using the information I had given them, they held a Kwanzaa celebration that included gift exchanges, discussion of the seven principles, and even a Kwanzaa feast," Rhodes said.

Yolanda Green, an inmate at the prison camp, said the celebration they held was enlightening and meaningful.

Green said the inmates limited the celebration to one day, but they tried to include all the major aspects of the holiday. The inmates dressed for the occasion by wearing the traditional African wraps and headaddresses.

"We were highly educated about many different issues of black heritage," Green said. "We were shown different types of African artwork like sculptures. We also listened to African music. We also were taught about some women who are or were in prison and how to apply their lessons to our lives."

Kathryn Browder, chaplain at the prison camp, said the ceremony concentrated on living historical figures more than dead ones.

"We did not want to focus on those that are dead," Browder said. "We decided to concentrate on the survivors of prison experiences, and to look at women and the issues that are impacting the prisoners lives right now."

Dr. Karenga included in the design of Kwanzaa, an exchanging of gifts. Since the prisoners cannot give presents to each other, they improvised.

"There are a lot of talented women here, and they wrote poetry and other literature and shared it with the group as their gifts to us," Green said.

Browder said the "no-present" rule forced the women to put more thought into their presents, making the gifts more creative and meaningful.

"The women gave each other more than presents; they gave each other memories," Browder said. "The effort put into the gift made the giving, as well as the accepting, a personal treasure."

An Aggie Kwanzaa

Garrett said the way his family celebrates Kwanzaa differs from the traditional Kwanzaa celebration. For the Garretts, Kwanzaa represents an affirmation of the family as well as the African-American people.

"Before the celebration, seven members of the family are picked to each light a candle representing one of the seven principles," Garrett said. "During the party, they light the candle and tell how that principle applies to them."

Some of Garrett's relatives own their own businesses and discuss the importance of the principle of cooperative economics/Ujamaa. Other family members discuss the importance of faith/Imani.

Garrett said the members of his family collectively possess the essence of the Nguzo Saba, and it helps him to try to incorporate the principles into his everyday life.

Garrett's aunt, who originally involved the

family in Kwanzaa, rents out a dance hall year for the large gathering. The entertainment for the day comes from the children of the family, who dance and sing for their elders.

The Garretts eat together during Kwanzaa, although not the traditional feast known as the Karamu. It serves the purpose of bread together and providing a sense of unity.

The Garrett family adds its own traditions to their Kwanzaa celebration. In memory of family members and ancestors that have died, they light a candle and call out the name of the departed loved one, much like the tradition of Aggie Muster.

A Growing Tradition

Even though the number of people who practice Kwanzaa remains small, the tradition and the values it represents has started to spread across the country. Greeting companies have started marketing Kwanzaa cards. Publishing companies have printed books explaining the holiday and its history, and children's books have been published specifically for Kwanzaa presents.

Garrett said even though Kwanzaa is a day celebrating African-American heritage, Americans can learn from the lessons taught through the Nguzo Saba and apply it to their everyday lives.

"Kwanzaa can be celebrated in one form or another by all people," Garrett said. "It is one of the main principles, and we need to learn from that."

► People in the News

Former wrestler dons Santa suit

FRANKLIN, Ind. (AP) — No more bumps and bruises for former professional wrestler John Hill — just the bear hugs reserved for Santa Claus by dozens of happy children.

After 25 years of being tossed around by the likes of Hulk Hogan and Andre the Giant, the former "Gentleman Jerry Valiant" loves his gig as a shopping-mall Santa. It's even brought tears to his eyes.

"I had a group of orphans come here last year, and a little girl came up to me and said, 'I'd like nothing more than a mommy or daddy to love me,'" Hill said. "What can you say?"

The 54-year-old Hill retired last

year after a career that included 10 seasons in the World Wrestling Federation. The 6-foot-3, 280-pound Hill now runs a landscaping business.

At the end of every visit, Hill encourages hugs from the children, their little arms becoming lost in his plush red suit.

"I had a young boy come up who didn't have long to live," Hill said. "He hugged me so tight ... I choked up. I couldn't do or say anything."

Animator back at the drawing board

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Ehhhhh, what's up, Chuck?

Drawing at Warner Bros., that's what.

Animator Chuck Jones is back at Warner Bros. making shorts with his

old friends, Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Wile E. Coyote and company. The 84-year-old Jones worked at Warner Bros. from the early 1930s until 1963, when the animation department was shut down. Now the company has 25 artists.

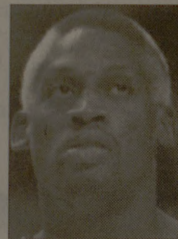
Under his new contract, Jones said, he has made "four or five shorts, with two or three in the works. I did a Roadrunner, a Frog picture, a Daffy Duck and a couple of others."

Rodman tagged as biggest bore

NEW YORK (AP) — Cross-dressing basketball star Dennis Rodman has been labeled the year's biggest drag.

The Chicago Bull has been la-


beled the "Most Boring Celebrity of the Year" by Alan Caruba, the member of The Boring Institute in New Jersey.



Rodman

"This is a people even if we them, we're pretty sick of the by the time year is over Caruba said.


Apparently Rodman's multi-colored hair, multiple face-paintings, rouge and gowns — not to mention the championship and his self-worship in August — prompted "mass media overexposure," the basis of Caruba's Top 10.



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