

السلام على من إتبع الهدى

'Peace be on those who follow guidance'

Former Nation of Islam member preaches against Muslim stereotypes

By CHRIS MARTIN
Staff writer

Imagine a man living deep inside a crime-ridden, drug-infested New York City neighborhood. Through leadership, social work and faith, the man helps take back the community. Now imagine what this man can inspire in the Texas A&M community.

Siraj Wahaj, a Muslim imam (leader of prayers) from Brooklyn, N.Y., will address the issue of negative Muslim stereotypes Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. in the Rudder Theatre for Islamic Awareness Week.

Younoos Latheef, president of the Muslim Student Association and a senior computer science major, said Wahaj is a religious leader for mainstream Muslims.

"Siraj Wahaj was initially attracted to the Nation of Islam," Latheef said. "He later learned about mainstream Islam and went overseas to study Islam formally in Saudi Arabia."

In 1991, Wahaj became the first Muslim in history to open a session of the U.S. House of Representatives with a prayer and a reading from the Koran, the sacred book of Islam.

Wahaj voiced his support for active community

involvement of Muslims in a press release from the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

"Everybody in America participates in politics," Wahaj said. "The question is whether we are going

to do it actively or passively.

"We feel unfortunate that the media portrays Islam as the next evil empire. It puts up artificial barriers and prevents people from learning."

Faisal Chaudhry
Computer science graduate student

to do it actively or passively.

"When you pay taxes, you are involved in politics. Every Muslim in America must be actively involved in politics."

Latheef said the purpose of Islamic Awareness Week is to educate the campus about Muslim culture, practices and international and local issues.

"I hope Wahaj addresses the struggles Muslims face and how they are portrayed in a bad manner by the media," Latheef said. "Hopefully he will por-

tray the truth."

Latheef said Muslim students face special challenges at A&M because they are different from the majority.

"Muslim students at Northgate have had problems, and [Muslim] students riding bikes have been driven off the road," Latheef said.

"The Islamic dress for women has also received harassment and derogatory words. I hope that A&M students will come out and learn about Islam — find out who the people really are and not depend on the media and other negative portrayals."

Faisal Chaudhry, a computer science graduate student, said that the theme of Wahaj's lecture, "The Islamic Threat - Myth or Reality," will address the distorted and false images people adopt of Islam.

"We feel unfortunate that the media portrays Islam as the next evil empire," Chaudhry said. "It puts up artificial barriers and prevents people from learning."

Chaudhry said the objective of Islamic Awareness Week is to increase the harmony and understanding of the various cultures at A&M and to eliminate the misconceptions and animosities directed toward Muslims.



The Veritas Forum at Texas A&M

For Information, see page 7

Ol' Sarge Wants You ...



To attend your General Class Meeting!

WHEN: Wednesday, October 8 --- 6:00 PM

WHERE:

- Class '98 --- Rudder 401
- Class '99 --- Rudder 407
- Class '00 --- Rudder 410
- Class '01 --- Rudder 402

People in the News

Elton John trades insults with Richards



NEW YORK (AP)— Elton John has nothing against the Rolling Stones, except that the band hasn't jettisoned Keith Richards, a "monkey with arthritis." The Daily News reported Tuesday that John disparaged his fellow aging rocker in an interview with foreign journalists in Atlanta, captured on tape Sept. 30. John made clear that he was getting back at Richards for a crack about John's rewritten version of his hit, "Candle in the Wind," which he sang at Princess Diana's funeral last month. Richards said John's main claim to fame was "writing songs for dead blondes."

The Daily News reported that John says Richards has held back the Stones.

"He's so pathetic, poor thing," John added. "It's like a monkey with arthritis, trying to go onstage and look young."

The paper said Richards' people had no response.

The Stones, who are in their 50s, have been touring in the Midwest, performing both oldies and cuts off their new *Bridges to Babylon* album.

Mandela attends Jackson's concert

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP)— Getting tickets to a Michael Jackson concert at the last minute isn't easy, unless you're Nelson Mandela.

Attie van Wyk, promoter of Jackson's current five-concert tour of South Africa, said the presidential secretary called at 5 p.m. Monday to say Mandela, his companion, Graca Machel, and her three children would like to attend that night's concert.

"I arranged for him to meet Michael Jackson and he had snacks with the star and then we took him to his seat," Van Wyk said. "He sat through the entire show and loved it."

More than 70,000 people attended two shows in Cape Town on Saturday and Monday. Jackson will perform twice in Johannesburg and once in Durban before flying to Paris.

Jack Paar recalls friend's beginnings



Philbin

NEW YORK (AP)— The 500th episode of CNBC's "Charles Grodin" was a talk-show host reunion, with Jack Paar and Regis Philbin recounting how they all came to know each other. Paar said he was having a feud with the late columnist and broad-

caster Walter Winchell, "an evil man." One day, he said, Winchell writes that he has discovered "the young fellow that will chase Jack Paar off the air, he is the best there ever was — his name was Regis Philbin. That was the first time I ever heard about Regis."

Award to recognize Vietnam journalist

WATERVILLE, Maine (AP)— David Halberstam will receive the Elijah Parish Lovejoy award, which Colby College presents each year to an outstanding journalist.

The author, who will accept the award at a ceremony Nov. 13, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1964 for his reporting on the Vietnam War for *The New York Times*.

His books include *The Powers That Be*, a critical analysis of the American news media, and *The Making of a Quagmire, Ho and The Best and the Brightest*, which probe America's involvement in Vietnam.



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MOVIE TIME GUIDE
THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS VALID FOR MONDAY - THURSDAY OCT. 6-9, 1997

CON-NAIR (R)	7:15 9:55
CONTACT (PG)	7:00 9:50
FACE OFF (R)	7:10 9:50
PICTURE PERFECT (PG-13)	7:20 9:40
NOTHING TO LOSE (R)	7:05 10:00
BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING (PG-13)	7:30 9:45

BOX OFFICE OPENS 6:30pm
MONDAY through THURSDAY

MSC Film Society presents

John Woo's The Killer
WEDNESDAY!
Oct 8 at 9:30 pm
Rudder Aud.
Tickets: \$3 or \$2.50 in advance at the MSC Box Office

Film on Video Free Admission
Biochemistry
West campus 107

Strawberry & Chocolate
Thurs, Oct 9 7PM

Belle Epoque
Sun, Oct 12 2PM

All films shown in Rudder Theatre Complex. Questions? Call the Aggie Cinema Hotline (847-8478).

Persons with special needs call 845-1515 within 3 days of the showing.

Website: <http://films.tamu.edu>

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