

BLACK WORLD

"KNOW THYSELF"
FOR OVER 25 YEARS

Published Bi-Weekly by Students from the State University of New York at Stony Brook

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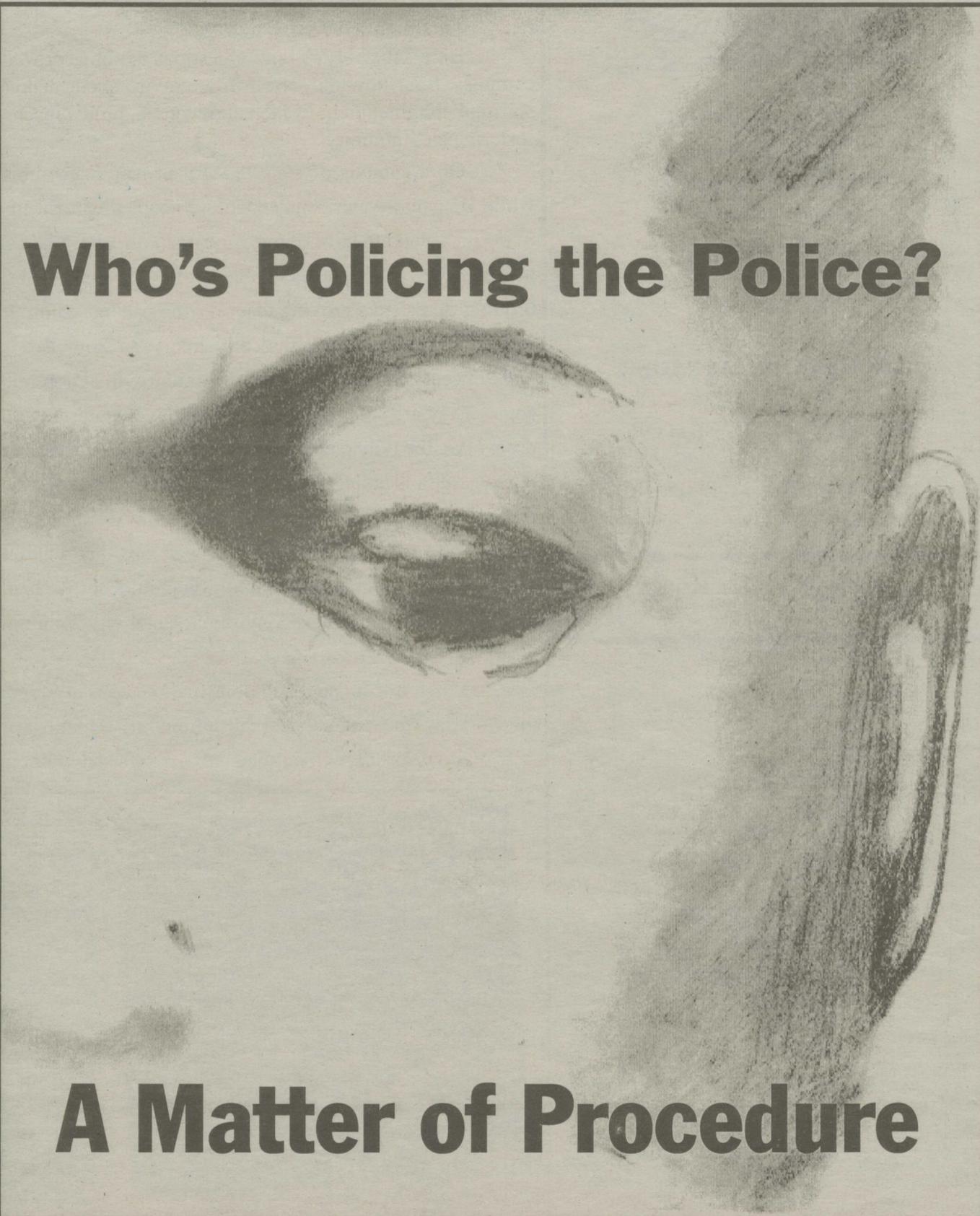
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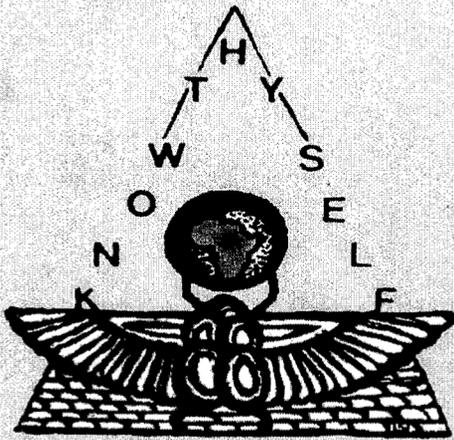
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BLACKWORLD


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First published in 1974, Blackworld is a newspaper created by the students of Stony Brook University. It is a club/organization that is part of the Student Polity Association. The purpose of Blackworld is to serve as an unbiased source of information to the campus community. Its goal is not only to address problems and concerns of other ethnic cultures, but to celebrate the accomplishments and aspirations of our brothers and sisters, to affirm ourselves, our culture, our Blackness. The opinions and views expressed are not necessarily those shared by the Editorial Staff. Articles, Viewpoints, Letters, Personals, Sports and Poetry should be submitted to STUDENT UNION Rm 072, or our Polity Mailbox located within the SAC. Some articles may be edited for length and for grammar. Advertising policy does not reflect editorial policy. Editorials are the opinions of the Blackworld staff.

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Editorial

Issues of safety have always been a deep concern of students at Stony Brook in lieu of the rapes in 1998. Since then, University Police has done a satisfactory job of keeping the campus community informed.

In 2000, the message has a new twist. Now students of color are apprehensive toward University Police as complaints of racial profiling are on the rise.

This should not be a surprise to you.

Here's the bottom line. Questions of police procedure should not make it on a college campus. Bout now they are. In an environment dedicated to the educational, social and spiritual enlightenment of men and women, police insensitivity proves a destructive flaw in fostering a community.

On a campus of 19,700, African-Americans make up 8 percent of the population, while Hispanic-Americans constitute about 6 percent in total. It should be surprising that minorities claim to have of one time or another been harassed by University Police. With the hiring of new cops comes evidence of a discourteous brand of policing that, in effect, has brothers and sisters proving that one, they attend school here. And two, they belong.

In a university as ethnically diverse as Stony Brook, more has to be done to bridge the gap between the police and the community; in action not words. Of course, there are more cops. They are stopping, ticketing and even harassing more people, but does that maintain order? Are the police targeting particular types of students?

Age-old police procedure should be replaced by a new brand of ethno-sensitive policing. All university officers should be trained in dealing with different ethnicities on a college campus. The fact remains that the new cops that make it to campus come from a different environment. A college community should not be held to the same enforcement as our neighborhoods and towns. Without sensitivity training officers are no more than badge-wearers.

When it is all said and done and the cops at Stony Brook saunter home at the end of the workday, the students and the community remain.

Stony Brook will not become a police state. Racial profiling won't prevail.

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HBCU: Why not?

A Profile of a Historically Black College and University

The question: What is a Historically Black College or University (HBCU)?

The answer: HBCUs are postsecondary academic institutions founded before 1964 whose chief mission has been the educational advancement of African-Americans. Located primarily in the southeastern United States, there are now about 120 HBCUs in existence, which accommodates a mix of community and junior colleges, four-year colleges and universities, public and private institutions. HBCUs enroll less than 20% of African-American undergraduate students in this country, but only award one-third of all bachelors' degrees and significant number of advanced degrees to African-Americans.

The focus of this article lies particularly on the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) located in Princess Anne, Md. This scenic campus enveloped in oak and column structures is the home to 3,900 black undergraduate men and women.

What does a HBCU offer that distinguishes itself from other institutions of higher learning? What benefits does it offer, if any? The answer, my friends, lies behind the phenomena of the Ivory Towers.

According to Todd Johnson, a senior from Prince George's County, Md, "UMES provides a great cultural atmosphere".

Johnson's reaction is much like those of other students who concede that HBCUs offer a community-like environment. As for UMES, it provides a great cultural mesh. The student population ranges from bass pumping Miami to the go-go driven natives of Washington, DC, the heavy tri-state influence and a healthy international contingent; all providing their respective music, fashion and language to the HBCU appeal.

UMES also offers a wide range of

majors like hotel-restaurant management, physical therapy (MPT), and agricultural-science, much like other colleges or universities. So why the discrepancy?

Antoine Hatcher, a junior from Brooklyn, NY contends that teachers make him feel their passion for his major, rehabilitation services. Classes are smaller and students are provided with the necessary conduit for free interaction with their professors, which is sometimes absent from other prestigious institutions.

The occasional gospel concerts, the comedy shows, the Greek step exhibitions and homecoming are big events that draw students from all around to these campuses of rich history. In a world where HBCUs are struggling for funding one thing remains—our history. UMES, like several other HBCUs was once a stop on the Underground Railroad.

There are some individuals who disagree with the value of an HBCU since the integration of public education in 1954. We must remember a time when people of color were not permitted to walk the halls of many colleges and universities unless they were pushing a broom. Boy has times changed.

HBCUs were developed to make higher education accessible to African-Americans. Hence, the development of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Howard University, Hampton University, Florida A&M University and a host of others set to celebrate our blackness and pride in our existence.

-Karamoko J. Andrews

Andrews is a senior at UMES. He resides in Brooklyn and is also very active within his community.

Ivory Towers n: a state of mind that is discussed as if it were a place.

Source: *WordNet* @ 1.6, © 1997 Princeton University

What Makes a Real African? Pt. II

"She thinks she's West-Indian. She's always going to the Caribbean Students Organization meetings." I was not astounded when I heard this comment made about me by another African. As an African and an American, I've encountered contention from both parts of my culture. I was born in America, so I am an American. My parents were born in Nigeria, so that also makes me Nigerian. If I am asked where I'm from, though, my answer is plainly, Nigeria. It is not out of lack of pride in this country but because I relate with the Nigerian tradition more than I do with America's melting pot of cultures.

According to Billyn Tarplain, a former Stony Brook student, "I was born in America, and I know my culture, and that is because I keep in touch with it. That doesn't mean that someone who was born in Africa knows the culture any more."

I have had many instances in which I have been alienated from my own people. I am accused of not knowing my culture, or not keeping in touch with it. I am a member of CSO, as well as the African Students Union. Does that mean that I am lost; that I don't know where I belong? Does it make me less of an African because I want to learn about cultures besides my own? I listen to reggae music more than I listen to African music; does that mean I'm not "keeping it gangsta"? Am I supposed to wear Kinte cloth and speak with an African accent to "prove" my background? I think not.

Nana Mensah, president of the African Students Union agrees with Tarplain. "There shouldn't be any separation. We are all from the same continent. We're here in America trying to assimilate to the American way of life so we should all stick together."

Your place of birth does not automatically determine your culture, your rearing does. As a people, I believe that we need to stop looking at where people were born. Instead, we need to remember where we all came from, and keep that culture alive here in America.

-Bunmi Olosunde

At Stony Brook, Excessive Police Procedure Warrants Criticism

-Duane A. Bourne

Members of the University staff, the Student Polity Association and University Police met on Sept. 21 to discuss complaints of excessive police procedure filed by two Stony Brook students earlier that month.

The meeting was attended by Carmen Vasquez, Dean of Students, Richard M. Young, Chief of University Police, Douglas Little, Deputy Chief of Community Relations and Patrol, Kaedrea Jackson, Interim Polity President, Natalie Hodgson, Sophomore Representative, Andrez Carberry, graduate assistant and immediate-past Polity President, Gary Matthews, Assistant Vice President for Administration, Michael Austin and Kedar Wilson, the freshmen involved in the incident.

Since both students are black, the incidents which occurred about a month ago sparked outrage among students over the police's action. As reported, a RHD from Roth Quad called campus police alleging that four men were in front of Hendrix College selling drugs out of a cup, when in fact, the students were waiting for a friend to take them to an off-campus party. Five squad cars subsequently arrived on the scene and the four individuals were approached and asked to keep their hands in their pockets. University Police continued to ask the individuals for a valid form of university identification which Chief Young admitted was proper procedure. But no where does procedure mention what was done next. An unidentified officer requested that the

individuals empty their "baggy pockets" out on the steps of the building. Even though, no drugs or drug paraphernalia were found, the unidentified officers continued to take their names, in what they called proof that they were interviewed by University Police. Then the officers left with no explanation.

Austin and Wilson had not filed a formal complaint when details of the incident were told to Carberry, who immediately organized the meeting. To Austin, the meeting did very little to address the situation. Instead it achieved in suggesting programs to let students know what their rights are if they are ever stopped by University Police.

The meeting "went off subject," he said. "We (Austin and Wilson) left unsatisfied."

While police contend that they were within their rights to conduct a full search, many at the university feel what the officers did was wrong. But according to Austin, one of the deputies mentioned that students are not obliged to empty their pockets for campus police.

According to Andrez Carberry, many concerns and complaints had begun when the 45-member department hired new officers. Yet, that has not been the only complaint of excessive police procedure since the summer. It was rumored that two students were ticketed for loitering in front of Melville Library during campus lifetime this semester. Also, campus police was

rumored to have had an altercation at the ticket booth of the Student Union during the Caribbean Students Organization welcome back party.

Another incident took place in the summer when the presence of a new squad was made known. According to a student who wanted to remain anonymous, he and a group of individuals were harassed walking under the bridge that connects the Union and the library. To this individual, when officers approached him and a group of Hispanic men, the overwhelming message was one of being singled out by race. Again, university identification was requested with officers promising to "keep an eye" on the group.

"I grew up in Brooklyn," he said. "You go to college to get over from that stuff."

On a campus as diverse as Stony Brook, most believe that new officers need to be trained in Stony Brook's rich demographics. Several attempts at an interview with Chief Young, Deputy Chief Little and Lt. Patricia Sarubbi for this article were unsuccessful.

Excessive police procedure is not taken lightly at Stony Brook which homes over 19,000. "This is where we live," Carberry said. "If you're approached in your building, it's as if you were approached on your own lawn."

-With additional reporting by
Yvonne Belizario

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH SAFETY

As early retirement forced the hiring of five to six new officers this past summer, one thing did not change- safety on campus.

Safety has always been a concern of the campus community. So much so that Richard Young, Chief of University Police and Douglas F. Little, Deputy Chief of Community Relations and Patrol, in coordination with University President Shirley Strum Kenny, have endorsed this year's theme AWARENESS + COOPERATION = SAFETY.

According to Chief Little, his department hopes to work harder to build trust between, "us and them". But one thing undeniably remains the campus' apathy

toward University Police. The community should not feel threatened by the officers on campus, not neglect their presence which the campus community has seen a great deal of this semester, Little said.

Though Stony Brook's new breed of officers have the responsibility of maintaining order on a campus of about 19,000, complaints about police procedure have grown. The preponderance of complaints rest on the claim that the new officers are not experienced in dealing with an ethnically diverse campus as Stony Brook.

Chief Little does admit that there have been complaints of racial profiling. In one such incident, "the young man felt that all cops

were bad no matter where he went, but when he came to Stony Brook and saw how the officers were acting toward the student body, his mind changed completely about the majority of officers".

In response, Chief Little hopes to maintain a safe environment with the president's safety plan as well as promoting a series of events that will bring the community together. Of which, features a police ride-all-along program. And although a partnership is in the works to bridge the gap between the cops and the community, Chief Little admits that the community needs to give them "a fair shake."

-Andre Rawle

The Cultural Divide

-Chris Latham

Here's my personal credo: If there's anything more dangerous than an ignorant black man, it's an ignorant white person. Especially when that white person is a good friend. It would be easy to let them remain ignorant, but for anyone who understands the truth, there is a responsibility to help the afflicted see the light.

Racially diverse environments are much the norm, so my cliques have rarely been predominantly black. As such, I've weathered my share of racially tense moments, sparked by cultural misunderstandings. Only at Stony Brook, however, have I had to rally the cause of my people in heated debates on a regular basis. My situation, one that many educated black people share, is not a criticism of the campus. It is simply a reality for any black person who chooses to become friends with misguided white people. In my case, I'm dealing with two genuinely good people, from completely different backgrounds, who just don't get it. And sadly, they mirror images of a larger portion of the American demographic.

There's "John" and there's "Fred". John has a valid excuse. He comes from rural New York. He lives in the suburb of a suburb. His parents own nine acres of farmland. His father is a conservative republican. It goes without saying that he's not well versed in cultural relativism. Fred is different. We have been friends since high school. He grew up in Brooklyn. He is a thinker. His parents have very little influence over him. And he knows a lot of black people.

Somehow, both of my poor misguided white friends embody the WASP syndrome. In a nutshell, they're Republicans. This in itself wouldn't be a travesty, if only it was not indicative of their beliefs. They think Mayor Giuliani is God's gift to New York. They are seriously considering making Governor Bush our next president. They oppose Affirmative Action and Welfare. We argue constantly.

John simply lacks an understanding of the issues. Or he did before I cut into him. He tried to tell me he's republican and conservative because democrats are corrupt and he wants to be

able to control his dollar. I might have accepted that, but I soon realized there were many things John didn't know about the Republican Party.

He didn't know that many republicans oppose a woman's right to abortion. He didn't know that the GOP is generally against gay rights to marriage and joining the military. He didn't know the National Rifle Association gets most of its support from "the conservative right." He didn't even know that George W. Bush is governor of the state with the highest death penalty execution rate in the nation.

I spent an entire year explaining these things to John. He's still a republican, but he's less adamant about it, and at least now he's informed.

Fred is different. Fred scares me. He grew up around minorities in Brooklyn. He has a brown girlfriend. He understands the issues. He just thinks republicans know how to run the nation, and that their economic policies compensate for their ideological shortcomings. That kind of logic is hard to argue with. Moreover, it's

- continued on page 8

A Call for Moratorium

(Sept. 12) -The Justice Department reported that blacks, Hispanics and other minority-group members were considered for the federal death penalty more often than whites, accounting for 74 percent of such cases since 1995. Presently 8.6 percent of inmates on death row are African-American, compared to only .86 percent that are white. This disparity in numbers have led organizations like the NAACP and The American Bar Association to call for a nationwide moratorium against the death penalty as far back as mid-June.

The moratorium was called with the hopes that the White House and all U.S governors can conduct a clear, comprehensive review and study the fairness and accuracy of the imposition of the death penalty in June 2000. But

states like Maryland and Philadelphia do not support a national moratorium. Maryland's penal system is one of the most racially biased in the nation and according to the Maryland Coalition against State Executions, 67 percent of the men on death row are African-American.

Attorney General Janet Reno and a panel of senior officials have been formed to pursue capital punishment in federal cases, but Reno said that she would not call for a moratorium on the death penalty while these apparent disparities are studied further.

"I'm particularly struck by the fact that African-Americans and Hispanics are over-represented in those cases presented for consideration of the death penalty and those cases where the

defendant is actually sentenced to death," said Assistant Attorney General Eric Holder.

Many blacks end up on death row because the criminal court system measures privilege, wealth, power, social status and race. For example, a 1984 death penalty case, *McCleskey v. Kemp*, showed that in Georgia, inmates with white victims are four times more likely to be sentenced to death than those who kill a black person.

This issue has not yet been solved because many states and officials are not willing to do what it takes to stop the bias that is present on death row. This only proves that race has played and will play a dynamic role in the African-American community— but it may be out of their hands.

-Shaila Mentore

Blackworld

THIRD WORLD STRUGGLE by students at SUNY Stony Brook

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 2

December 4, 1978



B.S.U. . . . No Laughing Matter . . .

Commentary

The Black World Collective applauds the action of B.S.U. as it does show, unlike what Statesman and Polity want people to believe that B.S.U. can handle their own affairs. While this action is good we suggest that B.S.U. put in mechanisms that will prevent or make it extremely difficult for this sort of thing to happen again.

It will be unfortunate if the individuals that are involved in this incident have to go to jail therefore we believe that B.S.U. should appeal to the state not only for leniency for these people but for us, the students of B.S.U. to conduct the trial and impose the sentence; a peoples trial! This appeal for leniency comes not from our belief in the innocence of those involved but more from our belief that there will be no justice given through the court system and that the alleged crime is a crime against us, the students. Think about it and let us know what you think.



At the B.S.U. meeting on Wednesday 11/29/78 Carlton Walker, chairperson of B.S.U. presented pertinent evidence pertaining to the attempted misappropriation of funds by Frank Jackson former B.S.U. treasurer.

Previously the Executive Committee of B.S.U. requested that Frank resign, this was requested because of the incriminating evidence against Frank (see centerfold). This evidence points to fraud, forgery and misrepresentation. The refusal of Frank to resign

in the face of apparent concrete evidence against him has forced the Executive Committee to implement impeachment proceedings. A judiciary committee is being formed to carry out the process of impeachment.

Dahlia Castilla Vice Chairperson is acting treasurer until the completion of the impeachment process.

After this matter was taken care of, B.S.U. announced that there will be a Kwanza celebration on Dec. 15, in the Union. More information will be announced at a later date.

SASU

by Leslie Birkett

How many Third World Students know that there is a Third World Student Caucus, (a satellite of Student Assembly—S.A.), that acts to voice issues relevant to the experience of non-whites throughout the SUNY system? Well there is, but unfortunately, this caucus is not recognized by the Student Association of the State University (SASU), a group which plays a critical role in the decision making policies throughout SUNY.

In the past SASU in cooperation with other higher education groups, lobbied for the creation of the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), Medicaid funding for abortions as well as obtaining other legislative victories. However, it must be emphasized here that SASU and S.A. have a history of racist practices behind them. Although S.A. provides the necessary funding for the Third World Student Caucus, this organization is at the bottom of their priority list when it comes to addressing relevant issues. The conference held the weekend of November 3-5th in Buffalo substantiates this. To make matters worse, the official Third World Caucus delegates Geoffrey Collins—SUNY Albany and Lillian Millner—SUNY Binghamton (chairperson and co-chairperson respectively), failed to address critical issues relating

to the plight of non-white students in obtaining a college degree as well as problems that these students face in day to day survival. It is important to realize that the purpose of this article is not to pit white students against non-white students, but to make the statement that the white students have their representatives, while the non-white students do not, they do not have a voice in the decision making policies of the SUNY system. It became increasingly clear after sitting through numerous meetings, that SASU and S.A. do not have the interest of the Third World students in mind, one member of SASU had the audacity to ask in so many unspoken words, why were Third World people even at the conference?

Mr. Collins and Ms. Millner were confronted by many of the Third World students who attended the conference about taking a firm stand to ensure recognition. They proposed a resolution to the effect that since SASU and S.A. evidently chooses not to address issues relating to the problems faced by non-whites, that the Third World Caucus use the remainder of the conference to address these issues themselves. They were told that it was 'radical' to even think about such a thing. The term 'radical' came up more than once during the

conference. It seems to be equated with truth because whenever a Third World student spoke upfront and angrily articulated about the atrocities we are faced with on the SUNY campus, someone would yell 'radical'.

These are some of the issues that were not addressed, but should have been; the decreasing enrollment of Third World students throughout the SUNY system, the problem of inadequate tutorial and remedial programs particularly for EOP students, the impact of dealing within a racist environment both academically and psychologically the budget cutbacks in Third World student clubs (i.e. B.S.U., LASO); cutbacks in ethnic studies programs, also the absences of tenureships in these programs. At the same time, linking up the struggles of Third World Nations internationally with the struggles we face here in the U.S. such as the influence of the U.S. in South Africa, Nicaragua, Chile, Iran and Palestine to show that the struggle is the same, the enemy is the same (capitalism/imperialism).

Unfortunately, the "leaders" of the Third World Student Caucus fail to see the immediacy in addressing these issues concretely in the face of their SASU/S.A. constituents. It is really ironic

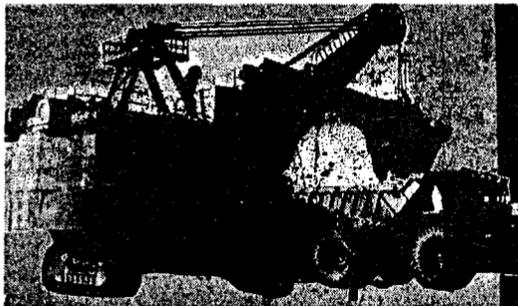
Cont On pg. 10

THE WEBER CASE—BAKKE IN STEEL by some students and faculty in psychology & philosophy

As the University of California dismantles its affirmative action program in the wake of the Supreme Courts decision supporting Bakke, a new "reverse discrimination" case having far wider implications for minority workers is likely to be considered by the Supreme Court this year. Brian Weber, a 31 year old white lab worker at Kaiser Aluminum's Gramercy plant in Louisiana is suing to remove the plant's affirmative action program by claiming "reverse discrimination". If Brian Weber wins, as he has done in two lower courts, it will mean the elimination of this affirmative action program and of others modelled after it throughout the country. This training program which helped to raise minorities and women into craft jobs was instituted in 1974 as a result of mass pressure by Black workers in response to widespread discrimination by the steel industry and unions.

TRACKING BY JOBS

Kaiser's plant in Gramercy is situated about 50 miles N.W. of New Orleans and from 1958 to 1962 the plant's 800 employees were all white. In 1962 three Blacks were hired. This was the case despite the fact that the counties from which Kaiser draws its workers is 39% Black. The three workers hired in 1962



were employed as janitors and laborers, the two lowest paying job categories. There were eight different types of craft (skilled) jobs, making up 273 of the 800 jobs, which were for years reserved only for white workers. No Blacks were hired for these skilled jobs.

The percentage of Black laborers rose to 10% in 1969 and then to 14.8% by 1974. Dennis English, the industrial relations officer for Kaiser, testified that out of the 273 skilled workers only 5 Blacks were hired. In other words, 1 in 2 who lived in the area were minorities, but only 1 in 55 skilled jobs at the Kaiser plant were held by minority workers. Kaiser argued that their employment practices were racially discriminatory but that Blacks in the general population lacked the needed experience. It seems that job experience and seniority are like test scores: You can't get them because of discrimination; then because you don't have them there is no discrimination!

THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN

In order to avoid expensive law suits and because of pressure from the federal government Kaiser and the United Steelworkers Union agreed to set up a quota system to train workers for craft positions, and also agreed to pay small sums for "damages". In return, Black workers no longer had the right to sue for more money. Importantly, it absolved Kaiser and the union from judgments for past discrimination. In this quota system half of all craft job vacancies were set aside to be filled by minorities and half by whites in the order of a separate seniority ranking until the percentage of minority craft workers equalled the percentage of minorities in the communities from which the plant's workforce was drawn. Weber's claim of "reverse discrimination" is based on the fact that he was passed over by minorities with less seniority. Of course, Weber's greater seniority is a result of the earlier exclusion of Black workers from the industry.

NEW FORM OF RACISM

Like the University of California which supposedly was for affirmative action and against Bakke; Kaiser and the Steelworkers Union are putting themselves forward as defenders of affirmative action. While appearing to be "progressive", in actuality Kaiser like the University of California is presenting a weak case before the court against Weber in the hope that he wins. The crux of the legal justification for affirmative action programs and legal suits by minorities charging discrimination is based on!

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THE ISSUE OF CAMPUS SAFETY!!!

By M.A. Dihigo

In a candid interview with Robert Corruite, who became director of Public Safety as of April 1, 1976, he discussed public safety's functions on campus, which are basically, protection of life and property. The latter being his overwhelming problem; especially with the Hospital Megastructure Complex almost completed. The activity that the megastructure will bring is going to cause Public Safety to hire additional personnel and will be forced to render "a campus wide program for electronic security control, monitoring devices, primarily in the administrative academic building complex, whereby we are going to be able to secure areas within this campus complex and hopefully cut down on the theft loss experience"

Mr. Corruite who is an expert on Police Traffic Services explained why it was necessary to have a four way stop sign by the administration building near the main entrance on campus and not at other intersections on campus where there have been several accidents. Just recently a freshperson named Betty Pierre was seriously injured while crossing the street in front of Tabler Quad steps. Corruite explained that the reason why a four way stop sign was installed by the Administration building was "that is the worst conglomerate intersection we have on campus... in order to stop traffic at that

intersection I made the decision that the safest thing to do at that intersection was to always stop". Those who do not, face a summons answerable in a traffic court.

Another program which Mr. Corruite is very proud of is the installation of radar devices in some security cars to capture speeders on this campus since its installation in September of this year.

Mr. Corruite, who has been in professional law enforcement for the past 18 years, believes that because "we (Public Safety) have been given the responsibility to enforce the laws of society does not give us the right to be judges, jurors or executioners. We are in the unique position of being the enforcement arm of society, in that we bring before society's laws, rules and regulations". Mr. Corruite is not overwhelmed by the fact that Public Safety only receives two to three complaints of harassment per month, he would like to see the time when he will receive no complaints at all. He does not believe that the role of Public Safety is or should be that of 'bullying' people around, even though they have the right of summary execution. He feels that Public Safety has moved and locked on to the idea that to be a security officer, for that is what Public Safety was called



before the name was changed, does not mean that you have to act tough and be disrespectful towards the students, faculty and staff.

Some Public Safety officers whom I spoke to, agreed with Mr. Corruite on the subject of whether or not they should be armed. They believe as Mr. Corruite does that there is no need on Story Brook campus to have the officers armed, only time they should be armed, they believe would be "when the department is involved in any type of activity where arming is necessitated by that activity." Mr. Corruite and the officers I spoke to, do not believe that we will see Public Safety officers armed in the near future because there is not a life threatening situation as a rule on this campus.

RHAP

A Poem For Thought

Lord, Lord
 Why did You make me Black?
 Why did You make me someone the world
 wants to hold back?
 Black is the color of dirty clothes,
 The color of grimy hands and feet.
 Black is the color of darkness,
 The color of tire-beaten streets.
 Why did You give me thick lips,
 A broad nose and kinky hair?
 Why did You make me someone who
 receives the hatred stare?
 Black is the color of a bruised eye when
 someone gets hurt.
 Black is the color of darkness, Black is the
 color of dirt.
 How come my bone structure is so thick?
 How come my eyes are brown, and not the
 color of the daylight sky?
 Why do people think I am useless?
 How come I feel so used?
 Why do some people see my skin and think
 I should be abused?
 Lord, I don't understand.
 What is it about my skin?
 Why do some people want to hate me and
 not know the person within?
 Black is what people are "listed" when others
 want to keep them away.
 Black is the color of shadows cast.
 Black is the end of the day.
 Lord You know my own people mistreat me.
 And I know this just ain't right!
 They don't like my hair.
 They say I'm too dark or too light.
 Lord don't You think it's time for You to make
 a change?
 Why don't You re-do Creation and make
 everyone the same?

God answered:

Why did I make you Black?
 Why did I make you Black?
 Get off your knees and look around.
 Tell me what do you see?
 I didn't make you in the image of darkness,
 I made you in the likeness of me!
 I made you the color of coal from which
 beautiful diamonds are formed.
 I made you the color of oil, the black gold
 that keeps people warm.
 I made you from the rich, dark earth that
 grown the food you need.
 Your color is the same as the black stallion; a
 majestic animal is he.
 I did not make you in the image of darkness;
 I made you in the image of me!
 All the colors of the heavenly rainbow can
 be found throughout every nation
 But when all of those colors are blended, you
 became my greatest creation.
 Your hair is the texture of lamb's wool, like my
 son Jesus.
 Such a humble little creature is He.
 I am the Shepherd, who watches them,
 I am the one who will watch over thee.
 You are the color of the midnight sky.
 I put the glitter of the stars in your eyes.
 There is a smile hidden behind your pain.
 That's why your cheeks are so high.
 You are the color of dark clouds formed when
 I send my strongest weather.
 I made your lips full so when you kiss the
 one you love, they will remember.
 Your stature is strong, your bone structure
 thick to withstand the burdens of
 time.
 The reflection you see in the mirror...
 The image that looks back is mine!

-Bunmi...The ENTITY

SODIES

SO UNBAREABLE...

LATELY YOU HAVE BEEN ON MY MIND
 AND THE CLOSER I GET TO YOU
 THE MORE YOU MAKE MY HEART SING
 MAKING THE ELAPSED TIME THAT WE
 CAN'T INTERTWINE
 SO UNBAREABLE...
 BUT AS I PICTURE THEE
 MY WORRIES BEGINS TO FADE AWAY
 AN ANGEL IS WHAT I SEE
 FOR YOU ARE A TRUE BLESSING
 A DELICATE ROSE MY LADY
 A RARE DIVINE BEING
 THAT NO WOMEN CAN COMPARE
 AND 'MAN' IS STUNNED BY YOUR BEAUTY
 AND I AM WILLING TO SHARE
 WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN YOU AND ME
 MY HEART, AS YOU HOLD IT IN YOUR
 HAND
 AND I DONT WANT YOU TO BE IMAGINARY
 I DON'T WANT YOU TO BE A FANTASY
 UNLESS YOU AND I ARE TOGETHER
 I DONT WANT YOU TO BE PART OF THIS
 REALITY
 BECAUSE THIS WORLD WILL NOT LAST
 FOREVER
 I WANT YOU AND ME
 IN A PLACE SO FAR AND BEAUTIFUL
 ONLY GOD CAN MAKE IT SO HEAVENLY
 AND WHEN I LOOK AT YOU
 IN THE BACK OF MY MIND
 I HEAR A MELODY
 AND IT PLAYS ON UNTIL ETERNITY...

-Andre Rawle

Unmasked

Masks tightened on faces
 Pale, white makeup pasted on
 Drawn on red lips
 We have to dance in this play of life!
 We have to play as the pawns in this play of life!
 Masks screwed on tightly
 Straightened hair
 Tight as rope
 Pressed and massacred
 No more wool
 Gone...destroyed and burnt to lay flat and still
 Crisp and untangled
 The masks are still stuck on
 Why do you destroy the nature within you?
 Don't you start no movement
 Sit quietly with masks on
 Chew the textbooks they throw in your face
 Swallow lies they serve on platters
 Invitations to Grand Balls
 Masks smeared on Prance around like a monkey in the
 jungle
 The makeup is slowly dripping off
 Ebony glows underneath
 A hint of full lips envisioned
 Why you are still dancing, prancing?
 The sweat flows down your forehead
 Oh no the masks are cracking!
 Run, hide—no more pale skins!
 The crowd will find out who you are
 Rip the masks off Beauty emanates
 Now you have become that creature you most hate!
 You are chocolate, ebony, bronze, even with a hint of
 ivory
 Be happy you are who you are
 The color of your skin emanates

-Crystal-Joy Medina

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL

Truth is central to the existence of any people. However, truth is often bartered in the marketplace of public discourse. But, truth has an infinite longevity. Let it be bartered and battered, truth remains alive and returns back as a question here, and a query there. True, yes?

Take ignorance for example. It is true that many people are ignorant because they are too lazy to educate themselves and they do not see informing themselves a worthwhile project. Sadly, ignorance and misdirection are the tools that have been used over time to put down, oppress and impoverish human beings. Yet, we hear from a report in a campus paper that many people are very ignorant about history. It is lamentable that many people are still ignorant today. Even more lamentable is the often-ignored truth that knowledge demands active pursuance.

Let me illustrate these truths with another truth that mirrors an ignorant perception that is widespread today. Amadou Diallo- the

young man that was buried under a hail of bullets in the Bronx last year. The press

griot

a literary magazine with a focus on consciousness

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coverage of both Diallo's death and the subsequent trial of the four white police officers that shot him were quite spirited. However, if you paid close attention to the characterizations of Diallo in the press, you may have noticed a trend. Diallo was always "an African immigrant".

Hardly did anyone in the press demonstrate any good sense to tell the public what Diallo was first and foremost - a foreign national and a Guinean. Who cares you may ask? Well, anyone who loves knowledge and needs the whole truth.

It is rarely said and bears emphasis here that Africa is a huge diverse continent and not a country. Guinea is a country in West Africa. Need I say that if Diallo were an Italian or a Belgian (just to name a few countries), his country and not his continent would have been drummed into our ears? My contention is that what we hear, say, believe and know mirrors what we are. Moreover, it seems to my critical eye that CNN, the New York Times and others do not truly foster knowledge. On the contrary, their insistence on the ignorant and indulgent use of the word 'Africa' is a reflection of poor and ignorant editorial taste.

-by 'Elewi'

- continued from page 5 "The Cultural Divide"

dangerous, because for people like John, it's highly contagious.

We debate almost every time we speak, but I doubt I've changed his perspective all that much. Still, I offer the opinion of the educated minority, and the fact that Fred makes the effort to hear me out must mean something.

Sometimes I wonder if I should just give up and let my misguided white boys think what they want. But then I look at the consequences. John and Fred can vote, and they can talk, and they can reproduce. That means they have a wide scope of influence. By forcing them to hear the minority perspective, there is the chance, however small, that some of what I say will sink in and affect what they tell others. It's a small chance, but the alternative is nonexistent. Given that option, I don't have much of a choice.

But let's forget me and my white boys for a minute. Let's look at America as a whole. Black people make up less than 20 percent of the population. White people make up more than 50 percent. That means there are a lot of Johns and Freds out there. But that also means there are a lot of educated

black people out there.

The problem, though, is that there is a lack of communication. It does little good for black people to congregate and bitch to each other, but not have meaningful conversations with the white people they are bitching about. All that comes from preaching to the converted is wasted breath and festered anger.

This is not to say that we shouldn't educate our own people as we try to educate others, but we must always keep in mind that it is those others who we ultimately must educate. Being the minority means that we don't have the power, but it does mean we have influence. If we are to evoke positive change, and eliminate ignorance, we have to spread that influence to all whom will listen.

This also relates to the black population at Stony Brook. Joining the African Student Union and Caribbean Student Organization, and being a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. or Malik Sigma Psi is perfectly fine. In fact, these groups probably serve as the most accessible forms to educate black people on campus about the issues relevant to

them. But they should not be anyone's sole means of communication and interaction.

The reality is that most white people do not think about the black experience, until they are confronted with it, or see it in action. From what many of my white friends tell me - and I'm not only talking about John and Fred now - they see these clubs and fraternities as exclusionary and uninviting. Whether that is the case or not is somewhat irrelevant. What matters is that this miscommunication is counterproductive to everyone. This does not mean that Alpha Phi Alpha should begin scouting out token pledges, but it does mean that every Alpha should make it his duty to open a dialogue with at least one white person about his fraternity, and about his experience as a black man.

I'm fairly sure that speaking with an Alpha would be beneficial for John and Fred. But for some reason, I don't think they're going to be the ones to make that happen. Like I said before, if there's anything more dangerous than an ignorant black man, it's an ignorant white person. But that ignorance can only be stopped through communication.

CELEBRATE HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Quotable:

**Men may not get
all they pay for in
this world, but
they must
certainly pay for
all they get.**

- Frederick Douglass

JOIN BLACKWORLD

THIS IS A CALL TO STUDENTS OF
COLOR AND ALL OTHERS INTERESTED

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WRITERS, TYPISTS, PRODUC-
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AND JUST IN CASE YOU ACCIDENTALLY GLANCED OVER THE WORD

WRITERS