



AHANA Hotline

Letter from the Editor

February 27, 2003

Dear reader,

I hope this finds you on the brink of one more successful semester here at Boston College. To the class of 2006, I trust you all are well-adjusted and growing increasingly more comfortable with your resources, surroundings, and fellow students. To the class of 2003, I am sure I speak for a large number of students when I say that it will be a painful experience to see you leave this Boston College AHANA community. We realize, however, you all are ready to go. We wish you luck on your future endeavors. Not leaving any one out: Sophomores and Juniors, hang in there!!



A picture of me. (You lucky readers, you!)

In any event, regardless of your year or age, the Thea Bowman AHANA Center is still and always will be a great resource for all AHANA students. I would like to personally invite all AHANA students to take advantage of the services that we provide here at the Office of AHANA Student Programs. The Thea Bowman AHANA Center is here for all AHANA students. We promise to help in the best way possible to work with you to reach your academic and career goals and, of course, to enjoy your time at Boston College.

Think of the AHANA Hotline as a forum for students of AHANA descent. It is an ideal place for clubs and organizations to submit information and/or publicize club events, functions, or articles recounting such events. Furthermore, if you feel inspired to write an article of your own, or anything you would like to share with the Boston College AHANA community, please feel free. The Hotline is the place to do it. If this appeals to you, please contact me at 617-656-8508, or via e-mail at kellypr@bc.edu.

We will start distributing our first issue for Spring 2003 Friday, February 28, 2003. We plan to publish our second issue of the semester on April 11th. To be included in the second issue, all entries must be submitted by Wednesday, March 26th.

Thank you.
Patrick Kelly, '04
Editor



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Letters from the Staff

Dr. Donald Brown—Director

Dear Students,

The Office of AHANA Student Programs has reached yet another milestone. We have succeeded at revising our website so that it better reflects the broad array of services provided by our office. More significantly, our office has revisited its mission statement in an attempt to convey that our vision is to reach out to all AHANA students at Boston College with an eye toward assisting in their academic, social, cultural and spiritual growth and development. The new mission statement at Boston College reads as follows:

The mission of the Office of AHANA Student Programs is to model servant leadership to students of AHANA descent and to provide a broad array of services that nurture their academic, social, cultural and spiritual development. While the traditional target group of the office are students who enter Boston College through the office's six week summer Options Through Education Program, the office's vision is to reach out and embrace all AHANA students in an attempt to help them actualize their dreams, fulfill their potential and become servant-leaders. The Office of AHANA Student Programs provides quality programs and services aimed at responding to the continuum of needs of AHANA students.

It is our sincere hope that our mission statement imparts that the Office of AHANA Student Programs provides at least one service that will aid in your journey through Boston College. Secondly, we hope that we have made known that we care about you and will do everything that we can to be of assistance. All you need to do is begin utilizing the office's resources. Lastly, the staff of the Office of AHANA Student Programs sees its work as a ministry of giving. We believe we have been called to assist young adults in fashioning wholesome and productive lives that will serve them well in their lives. We also believe, as has been recorded in the Holy Bible's New Testament, Book of Luke, "To whom much is given, much is required." In connection with this point, it is our hope that when you leave Boston College, you will give your time and talent in service to others.

Good luck in your academic journey. Please make an appointment to meet with your Academic Advisor to begin a joint adventure to your success.

Sincerely,
Donald Brown, Ed.D

Joana Maynard—Assistant Director

Ms. Joana Maynard has served as the Assistant Director of the Office of AHANA Student Programs beginning in 1985. In this capacity, Ms. Maynard is a counselor to an assigned group of students and coordinator of the Options Through Education Program and the Thea Bowman AHANA Scholars Program.

With a strong interest and devotion to the field of ministry, Ms. Maynard has a proven record of studies and work in the field. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree with a specialization in Ministry in Complex Urban Settings. On campus, Ms. Maynard is actively involved with the Black Campus Ministry and the Organization of Latin American Affairs,



"...we care about you and will do everything that we can to be of assistance." Dr. Brown

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among other student clubs and organizations in addition to university committees such as the Archbishop Oscar Romero Scholarship Committee. Embracing that students are leaders, Ms. Maynard coordinates and presents workshops on leadership to various student groups. Off campus, she is a member of the New England Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (NEAEOPP) and the Association of Jesuit Colleges & Universities.

Prior to her arrival at Boston College, Ms. Maynard held various positions related to education, ministry and public service. Among other posts, Ms. Maynard has served as a Teaching Assistant at the Center for Urban Ministerial Education/GCTS, a Program Coordinator and a Bilingual Educational Counselor for the Hispanic Office of Planning & Evaluation.

Inés Maturana—Associate Director

I joined Boston College in June 2002 as Associate Director of the Office of AHANA Student Programs. My major responsibilities include working with the Director to provide overall leadership in carrying out the operations of the office, coordinating the Benjamin E. Mays Mentoring Program, and serving as counselor/advisor to a selected group of third and fourth year students. I also serve as the office's liaison to the Career Center and the CIPP and student organizations, e.g., BC MAPS, the Multicultural Club, the AHANA Management Academy, and the Minority Engineers of BC.

I am a doctoral candidate in Higher Education Administration at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. I hold a Master's degree in Intercultural Relations from Lesley University and a Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages from Universidad de los Andes (Bogotá, Colombia).



Inés Maturana joined the Office of AHANA Student Programs as their Associate Director in June 2002.

Siu Ming Luie—Program Coordinator/Counselor

As the Program Coordinator/Counselor in the Office of AHANA Student Programs, I am responsible for coordinating the Jaime Escalante Tutorial Program, which offers free academic tutorial services to all students, and serving as Editor-in-Chief for the AHANA Hotline, our newsletter. Additionally, I develop and manage our new office website (www.bc.edu/ahana). Most importantly, I am the academic advisor/counselor for first and second year non-OTE students whose last names begin with M through Z. I have had the pleasure of meeting some of you already and am looking forward to meeting all of you soon. So, if you haven't already done so, please do come by the office to just say "hello" or to actually sit down with me for a little chat. I have appointments available Monday through Friday.

Here's a little tidbit about myself. Before the age of ten, I emigrated from Hong Kong with my family. Since then, I have spent most of my days in Boston, MA. I received a fine education in the Boston Public School system and Brandeis University. Prior to coming to Boston College in January 2003, I have held a couple of positions in higher education. Namely, I was a director of academic assessment and advising for a little while and then a consultant for even a shorter while. I just finished my Masters degree in Higher Education Management at the University of Pennsylvania over the summer and I'm hoping to continue my studies here at Boston College.

I'm excited to be here and would love to work with you to help you succeed in academia and life.



"Before the age of ten, I emigrated from Hong Kong with my family. Since then, I have spent most of my days in Boston, MA." Siu Ming Luie

Yvonne McBarnett—Administrative Assistant

I am looking forward to interacting with the students throughout the year. The Office of AHANA Student Programs is a warm welcoming environment to experience. I am here to support you in whichever way I can. My hobby is smiling. Therefore, it's my deepest desire to see everyone who comes through the office to leave with a smile on their face. I will be here to help you excel in your higher education.



"My hobby is smiling," says our lovely new administrative assistant, Yvonne McBarnett.

Steve Viveiros—Academic Counselor

Joining the Office of AHANA Student Programs in February of 2003, I am excited to be working as an Academic Counselor for such a great group of students. This position offers support and guidance to most of the OTE (Options Through Education) students and a caseload of the first and second year AHANA students at Boston College. I am available for any academic and/or personal assistance Monday through Friday. I want to get to know you and to assist you in making your dreams a reality. I invite you to take the opportunity to schedule an appointment so that we can talk about your whole educational career here at Boston College.

Sharing a little about myself, I was raised in an Azorean family who immigrated to the US in 1970. I grew up in a small town near New Bedford, MA and then moved onto Stonehill College where I completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mathematics and Foreign Languages. All together, I was able to learn conversational Portuguese, Spanish and some French through my family and education. I moved onto Northeastern University where I completed a Masters of Science Degree in College Student Development and Counseling. I worked in Residential Life, Orientation and the Center for Academic Advising in the College of Arts and Sciences while at Northeastern. With this education and experience, I look forward to helping YOU make the most of your time here at BC. Please come in and meet with me as I am looking forward to getting to know you also.



Steve Viveiros, the newest addition to the OASP Family, will work primarily with OTE students.

Student Worker of the Month

Karen Rampersad

Karen has been working with the Office of AHANA Students Programs since the summer 2002, when she was a Preceptor for the Options Through Education Program. Last fall she became a Peer Mentor for freshmen and sophomores. In that role, she helps acquaint new students with campus life, encourages students to participate in program activities and provides administrative support to Steven Viveiros. Karen is majoring in Secondary Education and Math in the Lynch School of Education, class 2004.

The Office of AHANA Student Programs wants to recognize Karen for her outstanding work as a Peer Mentor by awarding her the Student Worker of the Month award for February 2003. Karen has proven herself responsible and responsive to the needs of the office and students. She has a professional and friendly demeanor which is very welcoming to the students who come in to the office. Maximizing productivity of the office, she takes the initiative to seek projects and tasks that would help facilitate the operations of the office.

Karen is truly deserving of this recognition and award. The staff at the Office of AHANA Student Programs is very happy and appreciative that Karen is with us.

On Sister Thea Bowman...

By Moises Savinon

"I met her at the final stages of her life..." said Dr. Donald Brown, Director of the Office of AHANA Student Programs. Sister Thea Bowman visited Boston College as her life atrophied from cancer. She came exclusively to inaugurate the Thea Bowman AHANA Center, at the request of Father J. Donald Monan, Chancellor of Boston College. A woman who has contributed as much to society as she has to be honored. Therefore, in a month that celebrates Black History, this article pays tribute to Sister Thea Bowman.

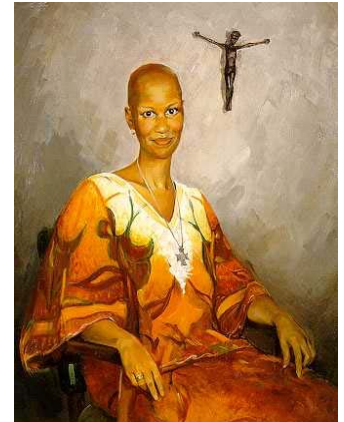
Sister Thea Bowman was an African-American nun and scholar who fought for intercultural participation in the Catholic Church. Her background was specifically in the order of the Franciscan nuns. She contributed to society in a fashion that left many in awe. The center was named after her, particularly because of her fight for people of AHANA descent. Moreover, her list of good deeds is extensive. She had many scholarly and humanitarian achievements—a list too long to discuss in this one article.

"In 1989 she was supposed to speak [here] at Boston College, but she was too ill," said Dr. Brown. Sister Thea Bowman was the first Black woman to receive a doctorate in Theology at Boston College. Father J. Donald Monan later decided to name the Office of AHANA Student Programs after Sister Bowman.

Dr. Brown was given the honor of inviting her to BC during her last days. "I was very happy and proud to welcome her to Boston College," said Dr. Brown. Sister Thea Bowman was able to look at her name printed above the doorway of the Office; however, she never actually entered the Office, for it was difficult for her to do so in her wheelchair. From there, she was taken to Gasson Hall where she was given a formal dedication.

It is important that everyone at BC refers to the Office of AHANA Student Programs as the Sister Thea Bowman AHANA Center. She did numerous things for the AHANA community through the Catholic Church, which gives one reason among many to acknowledge her namesake. "People should call it the Sister Thea Bowman AHANA Center because it is one of the few places at Boston College that is named after a person of color," stated Dr. Brown. We should, out of respect, refer to the Office as its true title in order to keep her memory alive. Inside the Office of AHANA Student Programs is a picture of Sister Thea Bowman.

~M. Savinon, Class of 2006, College of Arts & Sciences.
He has written for the Heights.



A portrait of Sister Thea Bowman.

Additional Information about Sr. Bowman

Sister Thea deservedly received her Doctor of Religion from Boston College in 1989. The following is a citation of a speech conferring her distinctions at the 1989 Boston College Commencement Ceremony.

Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration; charismatic evangelist calling Black Catholics to their rightful place and to the expression of their culture within the church, advocate and consultant for intercultural awareness for the Diocese of Jackson; scholar of English Language and literature expert in the Renaissance and the works of William Faulkner; master teacher whose methodology, rich in Black Community's traditional ways of learning and doing, profoundly touches rural Mississippi school children, university students, and world-wide lecture or concert audiences alike. In the glory of your ministry we witness the Franciscan ideal of joy rendered more radiant by a woman of lively, living faith, truly Black and authentically Catholic. To your lifetime of building the Kingdom of God, preaching the Good News in the language of your people, and reclaiming the virtues and values that are your inheritance, Boston College says an approving "Amen!" and proudly declares you Doctor of Religion.

To learn more about Sister Thea Bowman, please visit the History page on the Office of AHANA Student Programs website at www.bc.edu/ahana.



The World of the AHANA Newtonites

By Kelly Rodriguez

What is an AHANA Newtonite? Well, since I am one, I feel I can give you a pretty good description of what and who we are. First and foremost, we are freshmen who were “chosen” to live in the all-freshman campus in Newton, MA. We are the ones you see walking from Main Gate in the rain, sleet and snow trying to get to class. We are the people who leave parties extra early in order to catch the last bus at 2 AM in order to get home. But most of all, we are the people who have tons of pride for where we live and who we are.

An AHANA Newtonite is a special and rare breed. We aren't only proud of Newton but we belong to one of the

biggest communities on the Boston College campus—AHANA. Even though we are on this Newton Island, a hand of friendship was extended to include us with all of the social and academic groups for AHANA students. Many AHANA Newtonites have joined groups and organizations where they come together with AHANA upperclassmen who have been kind and welcoming [to freshmen]. No longer do we feel “out of the loop.” We have entered a very large family that never turns its back or hesitates to lend that hand.

While on Newton, we are thinking of new ways to improve the AHANA community by starting clubs such as UBC.

We are hanging out, studying, and looking forward to the weekend. We are proud to be Newtonites and proud to be AHANA students. I would like to say thank you for every opportunity I have been able to encounter through AHANA—the new friends, the new community—but most of all the new family. So come visit some time. All Hail AHANA Newtonites' Achievement.

~K. Rodriguez, Class of 2006, College of Arts & Sciences



Newton campus' Stuart House

AHANA Website Launch (www.bc.edu/)

The Office of AHANA Student Programs would like to announce the official launch of the new and improved AHANA website. The site underwent a much needed makeover, thanks to our Program Coordinator/Counselor Siu Ming Luie and the support from Web Developer Noah Kuhn and his colleagues. The official website went live Friday, February 28 at 10:30AM. The new interface features a calendar of events, biographies of Benjamin E. Mays and Jaime Escalante, and the Summer Tuition Remission application, and much more.

Study Abroad

Boston College offers 60+ programs in over 30 different countries. Compliment your Boston College courses by taking challenging courses abroad. Improve your language competency and gain fluency in a foreign language by spending a summer/semester/year abroad!!!

What do I need to do to begin the process of applying to study abroad?

1. Attend one Planning Workshop at Hovey House's Library every Mon. & Thurs. at 4:30 PM.
2. Research Programs: www.bc.edu/international OR Hovey House Resource Room.
3. Meet with an international study advisor: call x2-3827 for an appointment.

Also, Joy Yamamura is available every Fri. from 12:00PM to 2:00PM at the Office of AHANA Student Programs for drop-in advising about Study Abroad.

**VISIT THE
WEBSITE!!!
WWW.BC.EDU/AHANA**



Community Service Opportunities

Committee to End Elder Homelessness Inc.
1640 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02118
(<http://www.ceeh.org>)

The Committee to End Elder Homelessness, Inc. (CEEH) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the elimination of homelessness among the elderly. This mission is accomplished through a unique blend of prevention, placement, and housing programs all designed to help elders find and succeed in homes of their own. To this end, all housing operated by CEEH provides a creative array of supportive services that assist residents to age with dignity, regardless of their special medical, mental health, or social needs. CEEH believes these goals are best accomplished through respect for elders and staff, with the desire to see both achieve their highest degree of potential.

Volunteers are needed to

- teach in their adult education program
- help CEEH staff and residences run smoothly by performing clerical duties
- meet and greet people with a smile as a receptionist/concierge
- provide or prepare a meal and socialize with elders
- pick up food from Greater Boston Food Bank and distribute to selected sites.

For more information about these and other opportunities, please contact Ms. Cyd Kane at (617) 369-1558.

United Way of Massachusetts Bay, Inc.
245 Summer St. Fl. 14, Boston, MA 02210-1133
(617) 624-8000
(<http://www.uwmb.org/>)

The mission of United Way of Massachusetts Bay, Inc. is to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities. United Way of America is the national organization dedicated to leading the United Way movement in making measurable impact in every community across America. It invests in the programs and services that strengthen the ability of local United Ways to identify and build a coalition around a set of community priorities and measure success based on community impact.

To find a volunteer opportunity anywhere in the United States, please search online at www.volunteersolutions.org.

St. Francis House
39 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02112
(617) 542-4211, Email: info@stfrancishouse.org
(<http://www.stfrancishouse.org>)

As the largest, most comprehensive day program for poor and homeless adults in New England, St. Francis House celebrates the strength and vitality of the human spirit and acknowledges the inherent value of all human beings. St. Francis House needs your time, talent, and support!

Volunteer your time and talent for one of their many programs, and share a part of yourself with the disadvantaged who need St. Francis House. Volunteers help out in every area of St. Francis House, from meal preparation to art therapy. Some use their professional skills to serve the poor and homeless. For example, Volunteer attorneys from the Lawyers Clearinghouse on Housing and Homelessness provide guests with legal assistance in civil matters.

To Volunteer, please call the Volunteer Coordinator at (617) 654-1212 or email the volunteer program at dwal-ters@stfrancishouse.org.

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Solutions at Work

1151 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 492-0300, Email: info@solutionsatwork.org
(www.solutionsatwork.org)

Solutions at Work helps homeless people get their lives back — permanently. Led and run by homeless and formerly homeless people, Solutions at Work provides transitional employment, clothing, furniture, and moving services to help people get back on their feet.

Some of their volunteer opportunities include serving as assistants in their Furniture Bank to unpack, sort, and organize all kinds of household items for four (or more) hours a week; as Job-Interviewing Coaches; as Math Tutors; and as Data Entry Clerks. For more information on these and other opportunities, please call (617) 492-0300 or email at info@solutionsatwork.org.

Massachusetts General Hospital at 55 Fruit St., Boston, MA 02114, (617) 726-8540 (<http://www.mgh.harvard.edu>)
 Founded in 1811, the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) is the third oldest hospital in the United States and the oldest and largest in New England. The 820-bed world-renowned medical center offers sophisticated diagnostic and therapeutic care in virtually every specialty and subspecialty of medicine and surgery.

Volunteers are needed in many areas. To learn more, visit <http://www.mgh.harvard.edu/depts/vol/index.htm>.

Christian Soldiers Inc.

Massachusetts Avenue Baptist Church
146 Hampshire Street, Cambridge, MA
(<http://www2.bc.edu/~brownd/default.html>)

Established in 1994, the aim of Christian Soldiers Inc. is to introduce participants to a variety of people, places and possibilities they would not otherwise be exposed to. It is hoped that participants will be viewed as serious young men and women who exude confidence and discipline. It is also our hope that these young men and women will acquire an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, a desire to serve their community and, most especially, an unswerving belief in God.

The program is for youths between the ages of seven and fifteen. They meet on Saturdays from 9:30AM to 2:00PM at the Massachusetts Avenue Baptist Church (146 Hampshire Street in Cambridge).

To get involved, contact Dr. Donald Brown at 617-552-3359 or donald.brown.1@bc.edu.

Office of AHANA Student Programs (OASP)

Boston College student leaders who are interested in coordinating a community service program through OASP should contact Ms. Siu Ming Luie, Program Coordinator/Counselor at the OASP, at (617) 552-4803 or email at s.luie@bc.edu.

Teaching Fellowship

Citizen Schools, a highly respected organization in the national out-of-school time movement, is hiring for their Teaching Fellowship program, a position that affords tremendous experience and professional development. It is a paid, two-year Fellowship, and Fellows graduate with a **Masters in Education**. They are looking for diverse, highly motivated, idealistic, talented leaders committed to teaching, community organizing and national/community service. This is a very competitive Fellowship, but they have had several BC alumni in the past (including Robert Ellis and Teisha Warren), and are specifically interested in hearing from BC students.

If you are interested or want to find out more, please visit the Citizen Schools website <http://www.citizenschools.org/teachingfellows>. You can also contact Sarah Bailin directly (sarahbailin@citizenschools.org or 617-695-2300 x136).

There is an Information Session at Citizen Schools' headquarters downtown on March 11th from 7:00PM-8:30PM. Please contact Sarah if you are interested in attending.



March 2003

Women's History Month

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 S	3 P	4 R B	5 I R	6 N E	7 G A	8 K
9	10	11 <i>*Dr. Brown's Prescription for Success</i> <i>*Internship Panel</i> <i>*Citizen Schools Info. Session</i>	12 <i>*Mays Mentoring Program Spring Luncheon</i> <i>*PSA Affirmative Action discussion</i> <i>*"How to Find an Internship"</i> <i>*BSF general meeting</i>	13 <i>*Interdisciplinary Studies</i>	14	15
16	17 <i>*Degrees in Black</i>	18 <i>*OASP Brown Bag Series: Grad. Prog in A&S & Schl of Ed</i> <i>*Internship Fair</i> <i>*Med Schl Admissions Night</i>	19 <i>*Thea Bowman AHANA Scholars Reception</i> <i>*OASP Brown Bag Series: Grad. Prog in Schl of Social Work</i>	20 <i>*OASP Brown Bag Series on Grad. Schools</i> <i>*Versatyle</i> <i>*Don't Order Spaghetti"</i>	21 <i>*OASP Brown Bag Series on Grad. Schools</i> <i>*BSF Pajama Jam</i> <i>*NAACP Def Poetry Jam</i>	22 <i>*Educators of Color Job Fair</i>
23	24	25 <i>*"How to Find an Internship"</i>	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Schedule of Events

- Dr. Brown invites you all to listen to his **Prescriptions for Success** workshop at on 3/11 at 4:30pm.
- 4 major corporations will be featured in an **Internship Panel** in Higgins 310 on Tues, 3/11 6pm-7:30pm. Contact Career Center at (617)552-4359.
- **Citizen Schools** Info. Session in Boston downtown: 3/11 7pm-8:30pm. Contact Sarah Bailin at sarahbailin@citizenschools.org or 617-695-2300 x136.
- **Mays Mentoring Spring Luncheon**: 3/12 12pm in Faculty Dining Rm.
- A discussion on **Affirmative Action**: Wed. evening, 3/12, hosted by the **Political Science Association (PSA)**.
- **AHANA Career Services** will host **2 workshops**, "**How to Find an Internship**," on 3/12 and 3/25 12:30pm-1:30pm at the Internship Office at the Career Center. Contact Career Center.
- **Black Student Forum**: General Mtg 3/12 at 7pm, Cushing 209.
- **Interdisciplinary Studies Discussion**: 3/13 5-6pm at Learning to Learn. Call (617)552-4551.
- **Degrees in Black** marks the first African-American production to hit Robsham Theatre at BC. Showing 3/17. Tickets are free! Contact Joi Branch '03.
- OASP will host a **Brown Bag Luncheon Series** March 18-21 12p-2p on Graduate Schools. 18th: Grad Prog in A&S and Schl of Ed at Hovey House Library; 19th: Grad Prog in Schl of Social Work at McGuinn 3rd floor lounge. Contact the OASP at (617)552-3358.
- **Internship Fair** in the Heights Room from 3-6 pm on Tues., 3/18. Contact Career Center.
- **Thea Bowman AHANA Scholars Reception**: 3/19 at 6:30pm at the Heights room.
- The newly-formed 4-man band (3 men and one woman) **Versatyle** will be the featured artists in *The Lounge*, a performance in McElroy's Starbucks Café at 7pm on 3/20.
- "**Don't Order the Spaghetti**: an interview etiquette dinner." 3/20. Contact Career Center for more info.
- **BSF FMP** will have its **Pajama Jam** on 3/21. Location TBA.
- BC Chapter of **NAACP** host its **Def Poetry Jam** at 7pm on 3/21.
- On Sat., 3/22, 10am-2pm, The Affirmative Action Recruitment Consortium of Eastern Mass. Is hosting its **Educators of Color Job Fair** at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School. For more info, contact Samuel Turner at (617)349-8512.

Office of AHANA Student Programs
Thea Bowman AHANA Center
72 College Road
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

Phone: 617-552-3358
Fax: 617-552-4313

VISIT THE WEBSITE!!!
WWW.BC.EDU/AHANA

Food for Thought... "Crabs in a Barrel"

(Author Unknown)

Crabs in a Barrel—the metaphor used to describe a group who refuses to support a member who wishes to rise above the clamor. The group will grab the prospective dissonant with their claws and pull him/her back down to their level. The problem with this metaphor is that it is also commonly used to describe African-Americans and our attitudes toward each other.

Women are catty toward other women who may be prettier or wearing nicer outfits. Brothers trying to make it out of the hood are called “sellouts” by their supposed friends. We can’t even stand together long enough to stand for anything. A brother will call a sister with a good job “uppity” and decide she’s too high-maintenance for him, even without considering the fact that she may be driving her BMW to an empty home.

Some of us see friends making progress and envy them, when we need to encourage them. “Oh she thinks she’s cute, I can’t stand her.” Well damn, if I don’t think I’m cute, who else will? It’s a crying shame that people from other ethnic backgrounds will live 20 to a room if necessary to push forward, but many of us are so busy trying to impress the “Jones’s” that we live check-to-check dodging creditors to support a lifestyle we can’t afford. My only question is—Why?

Why is it that the same supermarket cashier that smiled and chatted with Becky, turns to me with a sneer when I pay for my purchase with a debit card rather than a food stamp? Can I live? Why can’t we be supportive of another? Why do we have to sleep with someone else’s husband/wife/boyfriend/girlfriend just to get a laugh at their expense? Why is there still some small area in the back of some of our minds that still says that the Cosby Show wasn’t real or representative of Black life, but Martin and Menace to Society were? Why are we still surprised to see African-American CEO’s?

These are all symptoms of the same mentality and if we are to make any progress as a people, it has to change. If we are to get past this handicap, we need to address it, deal with it and begin to encourage and embrace one another. I’m not talking about just in front of the cameras and podiums. I’m talking about every single day. We can’t expect to be treated with respect by outsiders if we can’t even respect each other. They laugh at us and our misguided ways, while they use their networking skills and connections to look out for each other whenever possible. It is unfortunate that so many of us were brought up in loveless environments where envy and jealousy were the only valid emotions. It’s a shame that so many of us were told by our loved ones that we wouldn’t amount to anything, but the blame game won’t get us out of this mess. The only way to combat this legacy is to look in the mirror and change what you see until the person staring back at you is someone you can truly love and appreciate. There is no true love without self-love. We were a race of kings and queens. We moved mountains with our minds until we were robbed of our birthright and taught self-hatred. It is time to reverse the wrongs.

You can remove a king from his throne, but you cannot take him from his royal blood. Cherish the beauty from whence you came!

Peace & Blessings.

“Bloom where you are planted.”