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Contact us:
If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, concerns, criticisms, and so on, please feel free to e-mail Mr. Irucka Embry, the Newsletter Committee Chair of the BSA, at iembry@utk.edu, or e-mail the BSA at bsa@utk.edu. Thank-you.

View the newsletter online:
http://web.utk.edu/~bsa/bsanewslet1.html and/or http://web.utk.edu/~bsa/bsanewslet1.pdf
Thoughts from the President

Who is the BSA
Aneisha Davis

Hmmm…it seems like that is a question that has been on everyone’s mind. It seems like it is a question so many people think they have the answer to, but don’t. Let me stop before I start sounding like MTV’s diary...”You think you know, but you have no idea.” But to be honest, that’s the truth. So many think they know, but have no idea, I think I will actually start off by telling you who we are not. We are not troublemakers. We do not specialize in offensive gestures and we do not hold seminars on how to piss people off. Now my general disclaimer is, “If people get mad in the process of us doing what we need to do, then so be it. You can’t save the world and please everyone at the same time. It’s just not possible.” I think saving the world is more important and that leads me to who the BSA is in real life.

The Black Student Alliance, also known as the BSA, is the brainchild of a couple of students who were in Dr. Cynthia Fleming’s class one Fall. In this class we learned about women who had helped to shape the nation and had gotten no credit because of their gender. We learned about black women who could not get jobs or could not be the leaders of movements because they were black or because they were women. We learned about the strong women who persevered in spite of what they were up against. In my opinion, it was quite an inspiring class.

Well one day we were in class and Dr. Fleming came in and began to tell us about how she had tried to become interim head of the History Department and could not. Many felt that she did not get her job because she was a black woman, but that is still up for debate (not a solid debate on the school’s behalf, but a debate nonetheless). All I know is that I saw a black woman with tears in her eyes and it made me think about all of the women we had learned about that semester in her class. I remember her saying that we might see her marching outside of McClung Towers by herself because she could not find anyone to back her up. I guess it touched a nerve with several students, including myself, that black women still had to fight so hard to get what they deserved. What bothered me was there was no organization structured to back this woman up. Even if students agreed that what was happening to her was wrong, no one was organized. We decided that we would start an organization that would be the political voice for the African American students. We also decided that we would seek out people who would help us address the problems we had been complaining about since my freshman year and actually fix them. Which leads me to another one of my sayings, “There is no point in complaining if you are not going to try and fix the problem.” We quickly organized ourselves in time to read a press statement at Dr. Fleming’s press conference. We attempted to speak on the behalf of the student body addressing the problems of African American students. Let’s just say we were not well received. Actually, we were ignored.

Many people would get mad if no one paid them any attention, but it only inspired us. We decided then and there that we had to form a group and make it legitimate. This was decided on after the Fall finals of 2001 and by January 15, 2002, we were a recognized
student organization. We had to work really hard, but I am so proud that we have done what we have so far.

To be honest, the BSA is a dream under construction. In truth it is an iconoclast’s idealistic vision of what the world would be like with no problems. That is why we try so hard to address what is wrong because I want people to live in a world with no problems and maybe I can help make it that way.

Okay…wait, maybe I’m getting a little carried away. Let me explain a little better. An iconoclast is one who attacks and seeks to overthrow traditional or popular ideas or institutions. An idealist is one who pursues his or her standard or model of perfection, excellence, or beauty.

Who is the BSA? We are a group that seeks to overthrow traditional or popular ideas or institutions in the pursuit of a standard of excellence. That is why on any given day you may see any of us standing on the library steps yelling about Affirmative Action. That is why you may hear of us drafting up a proposal that lists the complaints of African American students. That is why I, Aneisha Davis, have a problem with people painting their faces black. It is a tradition that interferes with my standard of perfection. Forgive me for having an opinion that is in opposition to the majority, but it is in the first amendment that I have the right to free speech. Hmmmm…now where have we heard that before?

In truth, the BSA is also structured to have community service and provide other services to the campus. We are a younger organization that has yet to accomplish all of these goals and have had little time to focus on anything aside from the political. We are slowly coming together as a group and I am so happy. What you hold in your hands right now is something we have been attempting to do since we began; have a newspaper. Well folks, here it is and I hope you enjoy our efforts. I am pleased to have given you a little more information on the BSA and to introduce you to our paper.

Peace
How to be Militant according to popular belief...

Aneisha Davis
WAKE UP!
Irucka Ajani Embry

Who are you? What do you want? Why are you here “students”: At this university – to be indoctrinated (we are not being educated) so that you can become enslaved to the almighty dollar at some corporation (government agency, university, company, or other entity)? Or to find yourself?

Why do you exist? How do you know that you exist? What is your purpose in Life? Are you dead (emotionally, intellectually, and/or culturally) or awake? How do you know? What does it mean to be dead and/or asleep on this plane of existence? What about awake and/or alive? Who owns you? Or do you even care?

What do you think? What do you observe? What do you question, if you do choose to do so in this “free” society? What are your solutions to the interrelated problems of the world?

As the Chair of the Newsletter Committee, I would like to discuss the purpose of this newsletter, how it is envisioned in my mind: the purpose is to challenge, expand the consciousness of, inform, inspire, motivate, and enhance the understanding of the world around you, the reader. Hopefully this newsletter will be a “beacon of light” and will shed and erase various myths and get you, the reader, to want to educate yourself and change yourself/the world. Truth is elusive, since lies are so readily accepted.

“The bigger the lie, the more people will believe it.” -Adolf Hitler

In order to illustrate the societal lies that we deal with on a daily basis, here is an excerpt from Creating A World That Works For All by Sharif Abdullah:

“When my eldest daughter was in fifth or sixth grade, she asked me a homework question: ‘What is the principal cash crop in Florida?’

My answer was immediate. I didn’t even look up from my newspaper.

‘Marijuana.’

The next day, her teacher sent a note home, asking for a conference. At the conference, I supplied the teacher with statistics that conservatively estimated the marijuana crop at twice the value of citrus products. She said, ‘That may be true, but it’s not the answer we want. It’s too controversial.’

I declined her invitation to participate in the consensual lie. I told her that I expected my daughter to get an ‘A’ unless the teacher presented hard evidence refuting my assertion or redefined the question. My daughter got her ‘A.’

The teacher expected us to participate in the lie that our economy is not based on drugs, pornography, stealing, or other activities we label criminal or antisocial. By our refusal to consent, the teacher had to face her own acquiescence in the lie. What was she teaching her students about society? Why was it important to lie to them?”

The BSA newsletter may be “controversial” to some because it may say that which we don’t wish to hear. As we would rather continue acquiescing in the lie that this is a “free” and “democratic” nation Empire that we live in. And that the University of Tennessee system[1] operates for the
greater good and not for the profits of the few that ultimately own/control this university. The U.S. “corporament” (corporation = government) is and has always been corrupt.

It is up to us to bring forth the First U.S. Revolution and change the way the world is. What are you going to do?

[1] The University of Tennessee is a statewide university system that includes: the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC), the University of Tennessee main campus at Knoxville (referred to as the University of Tennessee) [UT], the University of Tennessee at Martin {UTM}, the University of Tennessee Health Science Center at Memphis (the University of Tennessee at Memphis), the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service and the University of Tennessee Space Institute at Tullahoma.
NATIONAL NEWS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Affirmative Action Upheld
Shelton Starks

While many students were graduating and planning their summer vacation, a monumental case was decided. On May 14, 2002, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled to uphold the University of Michigan Law School’s affirmative action policies in *Grutter v. Bollinger*.

The plaintiff in this case, Barbara Grutter, sued the University of Michigan Law School when she was denied admission citing reverse discrimination. Grutter maintained that UM’s affirmative action policy contained a “hidden quota” and a “double standard” that was unconstitutional. The defense had two parties working to uphold affirmative action, the original defendants, University of Michigan Law School, and a group of student interveners that consisted of 41 named students and several pro-affirmative action groups, such as Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary (BAMN). The University argued that their policy was written precisely within the guidelines of *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, a case that decided that an affirmative action policy must have a compelling interest and must not be a quota. The student interveners argued that diversity was a compelling interest.

You may be asking yourself, “what does this have to do with me, I live in Tennessee?” Simple, Tennessee sits in the 6th circuit and must adhere to the decisions set forth at the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, if University of Michigan Law School lost its case there would be no more affirmative action for any graduate and professional schools in Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee. That decision would definitely spark a challenge to affirmative action on the undergraduate level in Tennessee and eliminate the need to have any other minority students of campus except athletes.

Right now students and other pro-affirmative action groups can breathe a sigh of relief because affirmative action was upheld, however this case is far from over. The anti-affirmative action plaintiff in this case still has a chance to appeal this case to the Supreme Court of the United States. If the Supreme Court accepts this case, our struggle starts all over again. I ask that you do not rely on my article as the your only source of information. Please review other sources such as [http://www.bamn.com](http://www.bamn.com) and research the cases I have listed in this article.
ENTERTAINMENT

A Musical Note
Angela Gibbs

Music is a unique art form that transcends all boundaries. Regardless of age, gender, race, or ethnicity, music affects all people. The African-American community plays a vital part in the history of music – whether through slavery spirituals or the new innovations of rap and R&B. African-American music is a segment of the art as a whole. Though considered art, music by African-Americans is a portrait of the past, present, and future all in one. It is necessary for African-Americans to convey their artistic abilities, but at the same time realize the message their music conveys to all people. It is also necessary to dissect the music to gain a better understanding of the art and culture.

CD Review: Voyage to India by India.Arie

With a classic album behind her, India.Arie set out to beat the sophomore jinx. Her first album, Acoustic Soul, made its mark on the music world with hits such as Video, Brown Skin, and Ready for Love. Her new album, Voyage to India, is the second chapter in her soul-searching journey to strength, courage, and wisdom. On the first single, The Little Things, India reminds us why music is her first love, singing, “I do this for the love of music, not for the glitter and gold.” Throughout the album, India continues to let you into her profound mind with thought-provoking songs, such as Talk to Her dealing with respect for women, and Slow Down – a song about baggage and chaos with lyrics, “slow down baby, you’re going too fast/ you got your hands in the air with your feet on the gas/ you ‘bout to wreck your future running from your past.” India expands her musical talent with this album, with songs such as Can I Walk With You, a more upbeat love song. However, she revisits her successful ballads, with Good Man. Through the Voyage to India, we re-explore what made us fall in love with this soulful sister, and at the same time we watch her grow with her musical ability. The sophomore jinx is just a myth for this talented singer. My only concern is, how will she continue to record classic after classic, but with her abundant talent, this should be no problem.

A+
Is it Recycling Time in Tennessee?
Sarah Surak

Recycling has been a surprisingly hot topic on campus the past few months. Since the infamous email sent out mid-September by Phil Scheurer (Vice President for Operations), everyone seems to want to know why and how the recycling system has changed. As a person who advocates for a holistic recycling program on campus, and has dedicated two years towards making this happen, I think I can explain. The current recycling program involves several parts. To say that little is recycled at our university would be untrue. Facilities Services runs a successful cardboard recycling program that employs two full time staff. Scrap metal, ash from coal burning, and scrap wood is also recycled through Facilities Services. What is lacking on campus is a recycling program that allows students, faculty, and staff to easily recycle materials such as plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and newspapers in academic, administrative, and residential buildings. The biggest problem with the recycling program is that it is currently a hodgepodge of programs, with no specific person held accountable for overseeing all of the recycling programs on campus.

S.P.E.A.K. (Students Promoting Environmental Action in Knoxville) has run two outdoor recycling centers for students living in residence halls for over a year now, and everything placed in the outdoor bins has been recycled. If S.P.E.A.K. stopped its involvement, the recycling centers would not function. There are several problems with the S.P.E.A.K. program including a lack of funding for advertisement and educational programming, strict time restrictions, and the closure of bins during exam week and the summer. If a student living in the residence halls wants to recycle, he/she must either take her/his recycling off campus to a facility such as the City of Knoxville facility at Kroger, or try to make the small time frame of 5 – 6 pm, Sunday through Thursday when the outdoor bins are open.

In academic and administrative buildings, the 95-gallon recycling bins that were once visible all over campus have been confined to loading docks and closets. This has been done for several reasons, one being an attempt to make our campus more aesthetically pleasing. Although the bins must now be out of sight, they can still be used. If your department would like to have a 95-gallon bin to recycle white paper, mixed paper, or newspaper it should find an adequate location to place the bin and contact Facilities Services.

So what is the future of recycling at our university? I am happy to say that there is hope for the design and implementation of a successful, holistic recycling program. Currently the Recycling Taskforce, a group of students, faculty, and staff, has been tasked with designing a workable recycling program. In the last week the group presented its program design to the administration. How will the proposed recycling program be different from what we have now? The most important aspect of the proposed program is the creation of a position in Facilities Services of “waste management coordination.” The sole job of this person will be to oversee all aspects of recycling and other waste management issues on campus, creating accountability for the program. Will this actually happen? I think that it will. It is time that our university joins the ranks of almost all other major universities and
takes responsibility for the waste that it creates. If you have any questions, please email speak@utk.edu.

For more information about S.P.E.A.K and recycling in Knoxville:

S.P.E.A.K. web site
http://web.utk.edu/~speak/

Where to Recycle in Knoxville
http://www.korrnet.org/recycle/knoxcycle.html
There are about 500,000 black people living in Germany (European nations do not officially record their citizens’ race). Nevertheless, if black Germans traveling or living abroad are questioned about their origin, they are usually met with the response – from black and white people alike: “Oh, black Germans, I had no idea they existed!” If they are asked the same question in their home-country, which happens at least as frequently, the most heard answer is: “Yes, but where do you really come from?” It is obvious that black Germans are not exactly a well-known minority. Instead, they are usually assumed to be non-existent and under a constant requirement to explain, or rather justify, their presence in a white country. Prior to the 1980s, virtually no research was done on the history of Germans of African descent and while scholars by now have shown that there has been a black minority in Germany since the 15th Century, this did not change the general perception of Germany as a (very) white nation. Contrary to US legal practice, until 2000, German citizenship was based on “the law of blood,” meaning that whoever descents from a German is legally considered German (even if his or her family migrated to another part of the world centuries ago). Whoever is without “German blood,” on the other hand, remains a legal “foreigner,” even if born in and raised in Germany. This peculiar concept of national identity does not only create a disenfranchised “foreign” population actually German in every sense but the legal one, such an anti-assimilationist ideology, which considers “foreignness” a hereditary trait rather than a temporary state also creates naturalized and racialized definitions of Germanness that put minorities on the defense whether they possess citizenship or not: until proven otherwise they are “Outsiders,” expected to be very literally on their (natural) way out of a nation they cannot belong to. German minorities therefore not only need to fight for political influence but for a basic recognition as part of German society. Contemporary black Germans are a case in point: contrary to e.g. the Turkish minority, most of them have one German parent (usually the mother: both among African migrants in Germany and African American soldiers stationed there, men vastly outnumber women) and therefore possesses citizenship. Nevertheless, being black, they are routinely perceived as “foreigners” (see the question about origin cited above – every black German has heard it hundreds of times). Being non-existent in the public mind, minorities are not granted the role of active subjects within public debates – in fact, not even if they are its object. The refusal to grant black Germans the right of self-definition is a striking example. While the term *afro-deutsch* (Afro-German) is almost unanimously used as self-reference by those black Germans who intervene in the political and cultural discourse, white Germans at least as unanimously reject it in favor of “colored” (liberal version) or *Mischling* (mongrel).

Since the 1980s though, there has been an active and diverse Afro-German movement. The term “Afro-German” already gives you an idea how important the fight of blacks in the US was for the development of a black German consciousness. In fact, “Afro-German” was coined by the US black feminist activist Audre Lorde when she first met black Germans in 1984 (back when African Americans still were Afro-
Americans. Prior to the 1980s, there were virtually no books, articles, documentaries or anything else acknowledging the existence of black Germans. Having no German role-models or sources of information, many black Germans turned to the US and Africa for models of resistance. One of the foremost achievements of black activism in Germany was the rediscovery of a long black German history that had been completely erased from the public record. A history that includes people who due to their exposed position left traces, like Anton Wilhelm Amo, a Ghanian sold to Germany as a child in 1703 and later become a distinguished professor of philosophy at the University of Halle in East Germany, close to where more than a hundred years later Machbuba, an Ethiopian woman, was brought as a slave by the famous Count Pückler. Sources indicate that the black German population was small and dispersed up to the late 19th Century, when colonialism, more decisive for the black presence in Europe than slavery, reached Germany. The nation had colonies for a very short period only (they were all lost in the First World War), but with rather devastating consequences for the colonized. Resistance was widespread in all of Germany's African colonies, most persistently in “Southwestafrica,” today's Namibia. In 1904, the Germans ended an uprising there with the first genocide of their history, slaughtering three quarters of the Herero population, many of them after the war was already over (the Herero are still fighting for an apology and reparations for this). Life for Africans and their families in Germany was difficult as well, they had a precarious legal status and similar to the US they were deemed fit only for a restricted number of professions: menial labor, serving positions or the entertainment industry. Prejudices increased after the First World War, when part of Germany was occupied by French troops, some of which were African. This lead to a massive campaign against the “Black Horror on the Rhine,” vilifying the children of African soldiers and German women. Dubbed “Rhinelandbastards,” they were recorded in special government lists. In response, African migrants organized in various ways, besides informal networks across the nation, the “League for the Defense of the Negro Race” (affiliated with Garvey's “Universal Negro Improvement Association”) and the more conservative “German African League” sought to represent black interests, and in 1930, the first congress of the communist “International League of Negro Workers” convened in Germany, with delegates from Europe, the Caribbean, and Africa.

The National Socialist takeover in 1933 abruptly ended all these activities, the offices of the “League of Negro Workers” were immediately raided, its members imprisoned or deported. A few years later, using the government lists of the “Rhinelandbastards,” African German teenagers were systematically sterilized. Generally, Nazi racist policies focused on Jews and Gypsies, blacks were left relatively unharmed in some areas of the country, in others, though, they were not only excluded from schools, public spaces, and most professions, but also sent to concentration camps.

After the end of the Second World War, blacks weren't included in the official list of persecuted groups (as weren't, until recently, gays and draft resisters) and their fate was never publicly recognized. Instead, black Germans entered the public discourse
again as an entirely new phenomenon, this time dubbed “occupation babies,” a term referring to the several thousand children of white German women and African American soldiers (white US soldiers fathered about 30 times as many children in Germany, but in the public mind, all “occupation babies” were black). With the community structures built up in the first half of the 20th Century destroyed by National Socialism, this new generation of black Germans grew up in isolation, faced with a society that was less than welcoming. While black revolutionary movements in Africa and the US were hardly aware of a black presence in Europe, these movements became an important source of pride and identification for black Germans (by now, the recognition is mutual, there are several exchange programs with the US and numerous cooperations between black German and African migrant organizations in Germany). Patterns of racism in Germany (and other parts of Europe) are similar to the US in many ways: blacks are supposed to be great singers, dancers, and athletes, but incapable of intellectual achievement, both men and women are constantly sexualized in media discourses, jobs or houses one had arranged for by phone mysteriously vanish when one shows up in person, and racial profiling by the police is common in all parts of the nation.

Recently there has been a new development, though: black Germans have been discovered as hip by the white majority, they are exciting, exotic, representing a new, open, multicultural Germany. This trend is largely a continuation of old prejudices, nevertheless it is the first time that the existence of black Germans is officially admitted, offering groups active all along the chance to use the sudden attention to get their message across. This is especially true for a vibrant subculture that had formerly been ignored by the mainstream: Hip Hop. Though Americans might not be aware of it, Hip Hop has become a worldwide youth culture, especially taken up by people of color. In Germany, the scene is dominated by black and Turkish youths. In 2000, forty of the most important Afro-German Hip Hop artists united in the project Brothers Keepers (and their somewhat subdued sidekick Sisters Keepers), aimed at fighting the growing racism in German society. Their first single addressed the racist murder of a black man by a group of white youths (only one of more than 100 killings committed by skinheads and other right wing groups over the last ten years) – the song, as well as the CD following it, reached the top of the charts and Brothers Keepers used their popularity to initiate a variety of activities supporting black youths and refugees (who, independent of their origin, live under pitiful conditions in Germany). In addition, since the 1980s there has been a national organization of black Germans, ISD (Initiative Blacks in Germany, engaging in political, social and cultural activities) and an affiliated women's organization, ADEFRA (offering women-oriented activities and building networks with women of color inside and outside of Germany) – the first Afro-German activists in the 80s were female, they published a book that remains the key-text of black Germany, Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out, the first publication to express an Afro-German identity and point out the long history of a black presence within the nation. Apart from various local activities there is an annual national meeting of blacks in Germany,
the Black History Month, and recently, a
cyber-presence, listing black owned
businesses, activities, and initiatives
(http://www.cybernoms.net – partly
in English).

Want to know even more about blacks in
Germany?

I am teaching a class on Black German
History this semester: History
471/German Studies 420, Tue & Thu,
2:10 - 3:25, Hodges Library 212

• The exhibit “Africa at Home” at the
Black Cultural Center, starting February
2, 2003, shows early 20th Century
images of blacks and Africa in European
popular culture

• The book Showing Our Colors: Afro-
German Women Speak Out is available
at Hodges Library (in English)