

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 7, 1995

Terry
All

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN PODESTA

FROM: ANN WALKER

SUBJECT: KWANZAA CELEBRATION

Per your request, the following is a collection of articles on the Kwanzaa celebration. Kwanzaa, meaning "first fruits" in Swahili, takes place at the end of every year, and families congregate in homes and community centers to reflect on the past year and focus on nguzo saga, the seven principles which will guide them to prosperous living in the year ahead. The celebration is non-religious and cultural, rooted in traditions from sub-Saharan Africa.

The Kwanzaa festival spans a seven-day period, focusing on the principles of unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. The middle candle in the Kinara, a seven-slotted wooden candle holder, is lit on the first night of Kwanzaa, with another candle lit every day up until Karamu, or New Year's Eve, when all of the candles are lit.

As you will see from the attached headlines (some from very conservative publications), this is a well-known holiday that has been heralded as a positive expression of African American culture.

Publication: The Los Angeles Times

Date: January 1, 1995

Headline: REVELRY, REFLECTION AT KWANZAA CELEBRATION; FESTIVITIES: BOWERS MUSEUM EVENT GIVES AFRICAN AMERICANS, INCLUDING THOSE NEVER BEFORE EXPOSED TO THE HOLIDAY, A CHANCE TO LOOK BACK AND FORWARD AT YEAR'S END

Publication: The Daily Telegraph

Date: December 30, 1994

Headline: BLACKS CELEBRATE THE 7 DAYS OF KWANZAA; AMERICA HAS AN ALTERNATIVE FESTIVE SEASON, WRITES CHARLES LAURENCE IN NEW YORK

Publication: The State Journal-Register (Springfield, IL)

Date: December 30, 1994

Headline: KWANZAA CELEBRATION IS UNIQUE; AFRICAN AMERICANS PROMOTE THEIR UNITY

Publication: The Chicago Tribune

Date: December 27, 1994

Headline: KWANZAA CATCHING ON IN GREETING CARD SALES; CULTURAL CELEBRATION IS BECOMING MORE OF A TRADITION IN BLACK HOMES

Publication: The Kansas City Star

Date: December 26, 1994

Headline: A TIME FOR AFFIRMATION; KWANZAA GIVES CELEBRATORS A TIME TO REFLECT ON PERSONAL BELIEFS AND AFRICAN TRADITIONS

Publication: The Baltimore Sun

Date: December 23, 1994

Headline: BOOKS HELP YOUNG AFRICAN AMERICANS LEARN THEIR HERITAGE, CELEBRATE KWANZAA

Publication: The Times-Picayune

Date: December 30, 1993

Headline: KWANZAA: AN AFRICAN AMERICAN CELEBRATION OF CULTURE AND COOKING

Publication: The Chicago  tribune

Date: December 27, 1993

Headline: KWANZAA KEEPS THE FAITH; AFRICAN FESTIVAL GROWS IN STATURE

Publication: The Orlando Sentinel Tribune

Date: December 27, 1992

Headline: AFRICAN AMERICANS CELEBRATE ORIGINS, ASPIRATIONS

Publication: The Chicago Sun-Times

Date: December 26, 1992

Headline: FAMILIES SOW TRADITIONS, GOALS, UNITY FOR KWANZAA

Publication: The Sacramento Observer

Date: December 9, 1992

Headline: KWANZAA GAINS AS AFRICAN AMERICAN HOLIDAY: AN ESTIMATED FIVE-MILLION PEOPLE NOW CELEBRATE THE SEVEN-DAY OBSERVANCE

Publication: The Chicago Tribune

Date: December 30, 1991

Headline: AFTER 25 YEARS, KWANZAA REAPS HARVEST OF CELEBRANTS

Publication: St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Date: December 9, 1991

Headline: RULES TO LIVE BY...SEVEN PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY TO A MORE HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

Publication: Modern Maturity

Date: December, 1991

Headline: A FAMILY FESTIVAL: KWANZAA: AN AFRICAN AMERICAN ORIGINAL

Publication: The Atlanta Journal and Constitution

Date: March 26, 1991

Headline: KWANZAA SEVEN SAVING DAYS; KWANZAA FESTIVITIES MIX HOPE, CULTURAL HISTORIES, PRINCIPLES FOR DAILY USE

Publication: The Washington Times

Date: December 26, 1990

Headline: BLACKS HOPE KWANZAA'S VALUES TAKE ROOT, INSPIRE CITY'S YOUTHS

Publication: The Washington Post

Date: December 20, 1979

Headline: KWANZAA HOLIDAY HELPS PRESERVE AFRICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

Copyright 1995 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

January 1, 1995, Sunday, Orange County Edition

SECTION: Metro; Part B; Page 4; Column 4; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 581 words

HEADLINE: REVELRY, REFLECTION AT KWANZAA CELEBRATION;
FESTIVITIES: BOWERS MUSEUM EVENT GIVES AFRICAN AMERICANS,
INCLUDING THOSE NEVER BEFORE EXPOSED TO THE HOLIDAY, A
CHANCE TO LOOK BACK AND FORWARD AT YEAR'S END.

BYLINE: By NANCY HSU, TIMES STAFF WRITER

DATELINE: SANTA ANA

BODY:

The Kwanzaa celebration Saturday afternoon at the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art was many people's first taste of the seven-day African American holiday. Nate Malcolm of Irvine said it won't be his last.

*

"I was never exposed to it," said Malcolm, 21, who won a wooden African mask in a raffle at the end of the festivities. "People talked about it and I'm into new things, seeing what the community is celebrating, so I came."

Kwanzaa, Malcolm discovered, "is a celebration to bring African Americans together in a positive light. It kind of gives everyone a sense of coming together as one. You look ahead and see the positive values that bring everybody together and you always look at your past to remember your heritage."

Kwanzaa, which means "first fruits" in Swahili, is celebrated in homes and community centers from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1. Rooted in African tradition, it comes at year's end, when families reflect on the past year and focus on nguzo saba, or seven principles, that will help them lead prosperous lives in the coming year.

Created in 1966 by Maulana (Ron) Karenga, chairman of the Black Studies Department at Cal State Long Beach, Kwanzaa is a non-religious holiday in which traditional African clothing is worn to gatherings. African music, dance and food are also plentiful.

At the museum Saturday, community leaders garbed in traditional African dress, took turns lighting the mishuma, or candles, that symbolize the principles of umoja (unity), kujichagulia (self-determination), ujima (collective work and responsibility), ujama (cooperative economics), nia (purpose), kuumba (creativity) and imani (faith).

The candle-lighting ceremony is a large part of the festivities. Each day of Kwanzaa, a different candle is lit. While a person lights a candle, he or she also speaks about what a particular principle means to them.

"This candle symbolizes umoja," said Joyce Jordan, co-publisher and co-editor of The Black Orange, a newsletter for Orange County African Americans, as she lit the first candle. "Unity in the family, community and the nation. It is the first and foundational principle. Without it, the others mean nothing. Unity begins at home."

Unity has been the core of Lawrence Brown's family since they began observing Kwanzaa three years ago.

"We celebrate the family being together with our good health and the good health of others," said Brown, sitting with his family toward the back of the packed room. "It's helping other people, strangers and taking care of our home."

Justin Hamilton, 11, wanted to go to the Kwanzaa celebration after he saw a soap opera Friday in which the characters performed the candle-lighting ceremony. He asked his grandmother if they could go.

"We have a membership to the museum and we decided to come," said Hamilton, a student at Samuel E. Talbert Middle School in Huntington Beach. "In history classes, they talk too much about Europeans. They don't talk much about African Americans. I don't know why we don't, but I want to. It's interesting."

Kwanzaa is a large part of 13-year-old Jason Jordan's life. Saturday, he led the audience in seven cries of "harambee," a term that symbolizes unity, collective work and struggle.

"I've learned a lot," Hamilton said. "I'm going to try to remember the seven principles. I want to try coming next year too. It's cool."

Saturday's celebration was presented by the African Cultural Arts Council.

GRAPHIC: Photo, (A2) 'Positive Light': Community members gathered at Bowers Museum in Santa Ana to light the seven candles of Kwanzaa, a non-religious celebration rooted in African tradition in which families reflect on the past year and prepare for the new. Left, Jatrine Bentsi-Enchil lights a candle representative

of faith. Kwanzaa brings "African Americans together in a positive light," one celebrant observed. ; Photo, (San Fernando Valley Edition, A3) At the Kwanzaa celebration at Bower Museum in Santa Ana, the audience joins in the "harambee" salute of unity, above left; right, Jatrine Bentsi-Enchil lights the seventh candle, symbolizing faith. ; Photo, (San Fernando Valley Edition, A3) Kofi Bentsi, left, and Rosemary Agnew-White wear traditional African crowns and clothing. ; Photo, (San Fernando Valley Edition, A35) Malika Rahmaan and Anne Jennings wear traditional clothing. CRAIG WALLACE CHAPMAN / Los Angeles Times

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: January 2, 1995

December 30, 1994, Friday

SECTION: INTERNATIONAL; Pg. 11

LENGTH: 629 words

HEADLINE: Blacks celebrate the 7 days of Kwanzaa America has an alternative festive season, writes Charles Laurence in New York

BYLINE: BY CHARLES LAURENCE

BODY:

IN seasonal testament to the march of the politically correct, Kwanzaa this year warrants not only a White House salute but sponsorship by McDonald's. Kwanzaa is a recently invented version of the New Year and Christmas festivals designed to offer American blacks a sense of their own cultural identity. The Jewish festival of Hanukkah has long been marked alongside Christmas in American schools, particularly in the New York area. Now the songs and ceremonies of Kwanzaa are being added to the classroom festival menu for what is officially known as the holiday season. In an official message, President Clinton said: "Warm greetings to everyone who is observing the festival of Kwanzaa. All of you can be proud of your efforts to infuse the holiday season with diversity and new purpose. Hillary joins me in wishing all of you a wonderful celebration and a happy new year." This year, Kwanzaa has achieved an unprecedented public profile. Beginning on Boxing Day, it culminates on New Year's Day when 13 million followers are expected to gather for family feasts. All week, the Harlem Apollo theatre is throbbing to the sound of drums while people engage in ritual dances. They will be in African dress, and, the theory goes, pay homage to and gather strength from their African roots. Mr Eric Powell, a social activist in Fort Washington, Maryland, said: "I see Kwanzaa as a time to reflect on the meaning of our African-American cultural heritage." The cover of the official Kwanzaa guide published in New York shows a black man and a black woman in pharaonic dress, below a half-globe turned to show Africa and surrounded by fruits. This recalls the theories of black academics, including Dr Lionel Jeffries of City University, New York, who teach that black Africans launched Western civilisation in Ancient Egypt. Kwanzaa is Swahili for the "first fruits" or the "first harvest", and the festival is based on elements of traditional sub-Saharan African festivals. While some say it is the Black Christmas, its organisers point out there is no deity involved. While most black Americans celebrate Christmas, Kwanzaa organisers have shifted their festival to coincide with the holiday season. In New York, the drum began to beat with Kwanzaa Holiday Expo '94, at the Jacob Javits Centre in Manhattan, the venue for such events as the car show. Here were displays of African dress and stalls

offering courses in African face painting. Among the sponsors was McDonald's, which printed a full-page guide on how to celebrate Kwanzaa in the New York press, and offered its own seasonal greeting: "The McDonald's family hopes you and your family will enjoy the spirit of Kwanzaa." Kwanzaa, born of the 1966 Watts riots in Los Angeles, was devised by Dr Maulana Karenga, director of black studies at the University of Southern California, to foster bonds between black American communities and pride in African origins. The festival and its meaning have been detailed in by the academics Dr James Johnson, Dr Frances Johnson and Dr Ronald Slaughter in their book *The Nguzo Saba and the festival of First Fruits: A guide for promoting Family, Community, Community Values and the festival of Kwanzaa*. The Seven Days of Kwanzaa are devoted to the principles of unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, co-operative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. The essential purchase is a Kwanzaa candlestick, the Kinara, which has seven branches. The candle in the centre must be black, the others green or red. On the first night, the family or community should gather to drink a toast from a common cup, and light the black candle. On each of the following nights, another candle is lit, until on New Year's Eve, or Karamu, all the candles are lit.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: December 30, 1994

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The State Journal-Register (Springfield, IL)

December 30, 1994, Wednesday, EARLY AND CITY EDITIONS

SECTION: LOCAL, Pg. 11

LENGTH: 607 words

HEADLINE: Kwanzaa celebration is unique African-Americans promote their unity

BYLINE: PATRICK ORR STAFF WRITER

BODY:

There was a holiday celebration at the downtown Lincoln Library Thursday night, but it did not involve trees, colored lights or party favors.

It did include dancers, singers and members of Springfield's African-American community celebrating the heritage and history that has made them unique.

Thursday marked the fourth day of the 18th annual Kwanzaa celebration, which will last until New Year's Day.

The seven-day celebration seeks to unite the African-American community through common experience, according to 16-year-old Andrae Beck, who, along with a brother and a cousin, made up the "East Side Three" singers. They performed Thursday night.

"This is a great experience because it helps provide for black unity," said Beck. "When I was told about it, I volunteered us to sing."

Kwanzaa is the brainchild of Maulana Karenga, a professor and chairman of the Department of Black Studies at California State University at Long Beach.

Karenga's idea was to create a unique holiday by melding traditional African culture to the American experience, using traditional African symbols and harvest lore with the contemporary American experience, according to festival organizer Gwen Harrison.

The word Kwanzaa means "first fruit" in Swahili.

"This is not celebrated in Africa," she said. "This is strictly an American festival."

Fatima Ngekia, a native of the African nation of Sierra Leone who now lives in Springfield, said the combination of traditional and modern cultures for the festival was a good idea.

"It is good for people to see how we do some of the things back home," the 12-year-old said. "The symbols that are used apply to all of us."

She admitted that some of the fruits and vegetables that were part of the local ceremonies Thursday were not from Africa.

"Some of them are not from home, but that does not matter," Ngekia said.

"As long as people are together and supporting one another, this is a good thing."

Thursday night's program featured singing by local youth groups, dancers from the Visions Dance School, and a variety of speakers who urged those attending of the need to support one another in order to grow.

Speaker Jerrie Blakely explained that some of the traditional symbols that are used for the celebration might be African in origin, but apply to American culture.

"The roots of the tree are from Africa, but the branches and the fruit of the tree are African-American," she said.

Some of the symbols include the Kinara, a seven-slotted wooden candle holder that represents traditional culture; and Mazao, a selection of fruits and vegetables that illustrates cooperation.

The celebration is based on seven basic principals: unity, self-determination, responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. One of the principals is celebrated each day of the festival.

The Lincoln Library has hosted the event for the last three years. Before that, it was held at the library's Southeast Branch.

The library got involved when a women's group that coordinated the festival wasn't able to do it anymore, according to Harrison. At that point, the library took over, and has been running it ever since.

"No other organization wanted to do it, so we decided to pick up the ball and run with it," Harrison said. "And it has been nothing but a big success. We have been doing it for 12 years."

Harrison said that last year's festival was such a success that she had to issue tickets this year to avoid overcrowding. She said the library issued more than 200

tickets for the event, though not all of those who got tickets attended.

GRAPHIC: Gretchen Kirwan/The State Journal-Register; Jerrie Blakely waves a red, black and green flag called a "Bendera ya Taifa" as she explains the symbols of Kwanzaa to more than 100 people attending ceremonies at Lincoln Library's Carnegie Room Thursday night. In the foreground are the seven candles which represent the "Nguzo Saba" (principles) of Kwanzaa. The celebration is based on the traditional African harvest festival. 1 color photo

TYPE: NEWS

LOAD-DATE-MDC: December 31, 1994

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Chicago Tribune

December 27, 1994 Tuesday, NORTH SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION: CHICAGOLAND; Pg. 3; ZONE: N

LENGTH: 602 words

HEADLINE: KWANZAA CATCHING ON IN GREETING CARD SALES;
CULTURAL CELEBRATION IS BECOMING MORE OF A TRADITION IN
BLACK HOMES

BYLINE: By Bernie Mixon, Tribune Staff Writer.

BODY:

Rows of greeting cards awash with bold colors radiate from a display at W.F. Enterprises Inc., a card distributorship in south suburban Robbins. The greeting cards weave a mosaic of family celebrations and scenes capturing the essence of Kwanzaa.

Inside, the cards spell out the "Nguzo Saba," the seven principles of Kwanzaa, while on the back of some a narrative explains the meaning of the African-American cultural holiday, which is based on an African harvest celebration and promotes family and community. Kwanzaa begins the day after Christmas and lasts for a week.

For the last 15 years, Welton Jones Sr. has sold Kwanzaa cards from his Robbins distributorship to local greeting card outlets. This year, he said, has been the best for sales of the colorful cards.

Part of the reason for the increase can be credited to a growing number of celebrants.

The cultural holiday was the brainchild of Dr. Maulana Karenga, chairman of the Black Studies Department of California State University, who created the celebration in 1966.

The name is derived from the Swahili phrase "Matunda Ya Kwanza," meaning first fruits. Karenga added the extra "a" to distinguish the African-American holiday from the African harvest celebration.

For the last 28 years, African-Americans have marked the seven days of Kwanzaa by lighting candles on the kinara, a candelabrum, with each candle corresponding to the day's principle.

The principles, also Swahili words, include umoja (family unity), kujichagulia (self-determination), ujima (working together), ujamaa (cooperative economics), nia (purpose), kuumba (creativity) and imani (faith).

"Kwanzaa as both a concept and a practice grew out of the movement of self-definition on the part of African-Americans," said Sterling Plumpp, a professor in the departments of African-American studies and English at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

While the movement embraced the virtues of self-acceptance, it was without a set of cohesive values, Plumpp said. Kwanzaa provided those universal principles.

As the concept of celebrating Kwanzaa grew, a noticeable void was present in the greeting card industry. So Jones came up with his own card in 1979 and began distributing two lines of cards, Freedom Greetings from Levittown, Pa., and Broom Designs Inc. from Detroit.

More recently, mainstream card distributors have unveiled their own lines of Kwanzaa cards.

"Kwanzaa really started to move eight or nine years ago," Jones said.

The sales may reflect an increased level of acceptance of the cultural holiday in the African-American community, Plumpp said.

"I've seen African-Americans who have reached a point where they are comfortable with defining themselves and with affirming their traditions and institutions without seeking white approval," Plumpp said.

"It's not a question of excluding anyone. They have a heightened sense of values and knowing something about Africa and doing for oneself."

The so-called "hip-hop" generation, young people born between 1965 to 1975, is responsible for much of the increase in Kwanzaa participation.

"It is the hip-hop generation where I've seen manifested a tendency to 'dread' their hair, to hold on to and project one's culture," Plumpp said.

But with popularity also comes opportunity for exploitation, he said.

"Kwanzaa cards per se are not necessarily exploitative. They can be informative," Plumpp said. "I think it would be very criminal to turn this particular celebration into a crass commercialism that has somehow taken over the celebration" of Christmas.

GRAPHIC: PHOTOS 2PHOTOS: Welton Jones Sr.'s (left) company, W.F. Enterprises Inc., Robbins, reports a boost in the sale of Kwanzaa greeting cards such as these (left, above), signaling the growth of the weeklong African-American cultural celebration since its creation in 1966. Tribune photos by Gerald West.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: December 27, 1994

Copyright 1995 The Kansas City Star Co.
THE KANSAS CITY STAR

December 26, 1994 Monday METROPOLITAN EDITION

SECTION: FYI; Pg. D1

LENGTH: 930 words

HEADLINE: 'A time for affirmation';
Kwanzaa gives celebrators a time to reflect on personal beliefs and African traditions.

BYLINE: DENISE CRITTENDON, Staff Writer

BODY:

Seven candles sit atop a straw mat in the center of Leah and Sylvester Suttington's dining room table. The display is highlighted by colorful sheaths of authentic Nigerian Kente cloth, several African carvings and a hefty basket of fresh fruit.

Next week they plan to add the final touches - a leafy green plant, a decorative cup and a separate ear of corn to symbolize each one of their four children.

The corn, the cup (known as the unity cup) and the array of red, black and green candles are part of a holiday ritual that occurs each year in the Suttington's Kansas City home. Starting Monday, the family will light a different candle each evening. In the process they will begin observing Nguzo Saba, the seven principles of the African-American holiday known as Kwanzaa.

Kwanzaa, a weeklong event which ends on New Year's Day, is a big occasion among the Suttingtons. Every year they gather together as many relatives as they can, from grandparents to distant nephews and nieces. Together they marvel at the elaborate display of African artifacts. And, together, they discuss their goals, their values and the personal events shaping their lives.

"Kwanzaa is a time for affirmation; a time to accentuate the positive and focus on beauty," Leah Suttington said. "We use the symbols (objects) because you can teach people about a lot of things but they may forget. But symbols will reach the subconscious and implant the ideas so they can become a part of everyday life."

Those symbols represent Kwanzaa's seven principles - unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith.

"In the evening, right before dinner, we light a candle and discuss the importance of one of the principles," Suttington said.

"Then we continue the discussion during dinner. "

After dinner they move the celebration from home to a more public forum.

Suttington is coordinator for the Kwanzaa program being sponsored by the Black United Front, or BUF, a community organization. So family festivities are just the beginning. During the Kwanzaa season she will help conduct an annual public ceremony which has been expanded to meet the growing demand.

When the BUF held its first observance 13 years ago, only a few members, relatives and friends were present. Last year nearly 1,700 showed up for the weeklong event. This season, Suttington said, the group is expecting even more.

Mickey Dean, a local attorney and member of BUF, said Kwanzaa, started in 1966 by California activist Maulana Karenga, is no longer an obscure holiday, observed only in private households.

During the last five years it has mushroomed, spreading to churches, community centers and, recently, to public schools.

"Every year we get more and more requests to give talks about Kwanzaa," he said. "It's taken off in terms of interest. Now, we're even getting requests from schools who want to introduce Kwanzaa to their students in some form or fashion. "

At Northwest Middle School, Kwanzaa instruction was provided in the form of classroom discussions, a hallway exhibit and a bulletin board display. School counselor Deborah Toomey said the school's administrators "wanted to provide cultural enrichment" to the student population, which is 99 percent black.

Unfortunately, she said, most of the instructors knew very little about the holiday. And many had problems trying to repeat words such as kujichagulia (pronounced koo-jee-cha-goo-leeah), Swahili for "self-determination. "

That's where the Black United Front came in. For the first time since the inception of the holiday, Dean and Suttington conducted a presentation at a local public school.

"A lot of schools in this district (Kansas City, Mo.) are beginning to talk about it, and that's important," Dean said. "Any impact we can have on our young people is important. The Nguzo Saba, the seven principals, are the ideals we want to instill in the young as everyday, living principles, not just Kwanzaa principles. "

In an effort to emphasize the principles, the BUF will sponsor panel discussions during the program. From the day after Christmas until the first of January, they will be the host of a candlelighting ceremony followed by an African marketplace, dance performances and a traditional libation ritual. Based on west African tradition, libation ceremonies are held in honor and appreciation of a family or tribe's ancestors. Libations - cups full of liquid - are poured onto the earth or a plant, while the family pays tribute to loved ones.

Suttington said the BUF program, held at Central High School in Kansas City, will be like one large "extended family. "

"We have taken what would normally take place in the home into a broader setting," she said. "We designed the program around the community. We're emphasizing that we're here together because we have the common bond of heritage and we've all had to endure similar struggles.

"I think people are really beginning to identify with the principles of Kwanzaa. One is self-determination. In terms of trying to solve ills affecting our community, people are recognizing it's time to start strengthening the family and values of the family and to depend on ourselves. "

GRAPHIC: Photo (color), Above and lower left: Leah Suttington of the Black United Front demonstrates to students of Northwest Middle School how to decorate a table during Kwanzaa. The demonstration was part of a presentation to teach the students about the Kwanzaa celebration and what it means.; JEFFREY WASHINGTON/The Star

LOAD-DATE-MDC: February 08, 1995

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December 23, 1994, Friday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: FEATURES, Pg. 6D, BOOKS FOR KIDS

LENGTH: 837 words

HEADLINE: Books help young African-Americans learn their heritage, celebrate Kwanzaa

BYLINE: Molly Dunham Glassman, Sun Staff Writer

BODY:

The African-American holiday of Kwanzaa, which begins Monday and lasts for seven days, provides an antidote to the commercialization and consumer excesses of Christmas.

Lavish gifts aren't the focus of Kwanzaa. Created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, a professor at Cal State-Long Beach, Kwanzaa is based upon different African customs.

It celebrates the Nguzo Saba, which is Swahili for seven principles: Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity) and Imani (faith).

In keeping with the spirit of Kuumba, children often create zawadi (handmade) gifts for friends and relatives. And if gifts are bought, they are usually books about African-American culture or history. Here are a few suggestions:

* An excellent primer for families unfamiliar with Kwanzaa is "The Seven Days of Kwanzaa: How To Celebrate Them," by Angela Shelf Medearis (Scholastic, \$ 2.95, 112 pages, all ages).

Ms. Medearis provides plenty of information about the origin of the holiday. She gives a suggested menu for a karamu feast -- a dinner with family and friends held on Dec. 31 -- and includes easy-to-follow recipes for all the courses: North African orange salad, Ashanti peanut soup, Gambian fish caldou, okra with corn, Ugandan spinach and sesame seeds, black-eyed peas and rice (Hoppin' John), baked sweet potatoes with spiced butter, Liberian rice bread, Caribbean fruit punch and Sengalese cookies.

The author also spells out directions for seven gifts to make. And Ms. Medearis

closes with seven biographies families can read aloud, one for each night of Kwanzaa. First is the story of Sheyann Webb, who was 8 when she took part in the first Selma-to-Montgomery march with Martin Luther King Jr. in 1965.

The other brief profiles are of Wilma Rudolph, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Benjamin "Pap" Singleton, Marcus Garvey, James Van DerZee and Fannie Lou Hamer. This book is a worthwhile resource.

* "Crafts for Kwanzaa" by Kathy Ross, illustrated by Sharon Lane Holm (Millbrook Press, \$ 6.95, 48 pages, all ages), gives directions for 20 projects that kids can make.

They include a simple mkeka mat woven with black, red and green construction paper; party favors that look like Kwanzaa candles (they're made from toilet-paper rolls and tissue paper); a trivet shaped like a pumpkin; and beads made from a dough of sand and white glue.

The directions and illustrations are so clear, even a klutz can use this book to get creative.

* "Families: Poems Celebrating the African American Experience," selected by Dorothy S. Strickland and Michael R. Strickland, illustrations by John Ward (Wordsong, Boyds Mills Press, \$ 14.95, 32 pages, all ages), is a collection guaranteed to warm the coldest December day.

Among the poets included in the anthology are Langston Hughes, Eloise Greenfield, Arnold Adoff, Lucille Clifton, Gwendolyn Brooks, Lindamichellebaron and Nikki Giovanni, who has three contributions, including "The Drum":

daddy says the world is
a drum tight and hard
and i told him
i'm gonna beat
out my own rhythm

* Floyd Cooper is one of today's most talented children's book illustrators. His twilight colors and earth tones illuminate "Grandpa's Face," "Chita's Christmas Tree," "From Miss Ida's Porch," "The Girl Who Loved Caterpillars" and "Brown Honey in Broomwheat Tea."

Now comes the first book he has written and illustrated, "Coming Home: From the Life of Langston Hughes" (Philomel, \$ 15.95, 32 pages, ages 4-10).

It is an inspirational story, capturing the loneliness of Mr. Hughes' childhood. His parents left him to live alone with his grandmother on a farm in Lawrence, Kan. Before she grew too old to speak, his grandma told him stories of her work on the Underground Railroad, of his two uncles who were Buffalo soldiers and of another uncle, John Mercer Langston, an Oklahoma congressman who was the first black American to hold public office.

Langston Hughes the dreamer was shaped by those tales, and he wrote poems and stories to share his dreams with others. "Coming Home" was clearly a labor of love for Mr. Cooper, and we're fortunate that he decided to share it.

* Another poet with an inspiring life story is Maya Angelou. Children too young for her autobiographical series, which begins with "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," can learn about her in "Meet Maya Angelou," by Valerie Spain (A Bullseye Biography, Random House, \$ 3.50, 94 pages, ages 7-12).

Ms. Spain recounts Ms. Angelou's often harsh childhood. When she was 7, she was **raped** by her mother's boyfriend. Ms. Spain writes about it in veiled terms, never using the word rape and leaving readers confused. For the most part, though, the profile is well-written and thoughtful.

It's too bad there's no bibliography, and it's also a shame that the editors, lacking photos from Ms. Angelou's childhood, decided to use stills from the TV movie "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings."

TYPE: REVIEW

LOAD-DATE-MDC: December 24, 1994

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The Times-Picayune

December 30, 1993 Thursday, THIRD

SECTION: FOOD; Pg. F1

LENGTH: 1125 words

HEADLINE: KWANZAA;
AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN CELEBRATION OF CULTURE AND COOKING

BYLINE: By WILLIAM CARRINO Contributing writer

BODY:

African food in all its creative splendor is the tasty centerpiece for the African-American holiday celebration known as Kwanzaa.

While Kwanzaa has been officially observed in this country only since 1965, the principles of this holiday are rooted in ancient African history and folklore.

What began centuries ago in Africa as a festival honoring the first fruits of the harvest and the hunt has been reborn in America as a week-long celebration of Native African food, customs and culture.

Kwanzaa began Dec. 26 and continues to New Year's Day, punctuated by family get-togethers at which African crafts, history and performing arts take center stage. But, the highlights of this annual cultural awakening is the grand African feast known as the Karamu, which is held on Dec. 31.

The Karamu banquet is more than a sumptuous meal filled with African specialties. According to Maulana Karenga, the founder of modern-day Kwanzaa, each featured dish at the banquet table should in some way reflect the African holiday's nguzo saba, a Swahili expression meaning the principles of blackness.

The first principle of the Karamu feast is Ujima, Swahili for collective work and responsibility. To fulfill this principle, each guest is invited to bring a traditional African dish to the karamu table. Often, a group of guests will work together on one course, like the customary African appetizer called samusas. These spicy, meat-filled pastries are frequently the products of a kitchen "assembly line" in which each dinner guest is responsible for one delicious part of the final samusas product.

Another Karamu principle, Ujamaa, stands for cooperative economics. Not only is the cost of the meal shared among all the partakers, but the feast should be

comprised of basic, not extravagant, food.

One popular dish that fulfills the Ujamaa principle is steamed black-eyed peas seasoned with coriander, lemon pepper, and a pinch of fresh ginger. Another appropriate side dish would be a simple brown rice accented with apple slices and raisins. Both of these Kwanzaa foods are basic, nourishing, affordable and quite appetizing.

Perhaps the one Kwanzaa principle that makes the karamu feast so filled with fun, excitement and delicious cuisine is the central theme of Kuumba, which in Swahili means creativity.

Cooks are encouraged to experiment with traditional Karamu recipes in order to add a new culinary dimension to the usual holiday fare.

One standard entree that has become a Kwanzaa favorite is a bright and robust dish called Jollof rice. Of West African origin, Jollof rice fulfills the creativity principle beautifully.

It may be made with either beef or chicken, can be as hot and spicy or mild and mellow as you wish, and can accommodate any number of colorful vegetable garnishes, from green and red peppers to carrots, tomatoes, radishes or plantains.

The plantain, a banana-like vegetable popular in East and West Africa, is probably the most versatile of all the Karamu foods. They can be sliced, boiled and added to Jollof rice, or nearly any meat or vegetable dish. When the plantain is grilled or fried in peanut oil or butter, the golden brown slices may easily stand alone as a delicious side dish.

Add brown sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg to the fried plantain slices and present it on the Karamu table as one of the holiday's best desserts.

Another delicious way to finish off the Kwanzaa feast is with a Kenyan dessert that is a sweet concoction of vermicelli, walnuts and raisins. Its mixture of dried fruits, nuts and grains is a rich representation of the most highly prized renderings of the African harvest.

In the true spirit of Kwanzaa, traditional African foods and customs are celebrated across social lines in order to create unity, promote understanding and ultimately enrich cultural backgrounds.

SAMUSAS

2 pounds ground beef

1/2 teaspoon cumin seed

2 tablespoons chopped green pepper

1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

1 package square egg roll skins

Dash black pepper

Dash seasoned salt

1/3 cup flour

1 egg

1 cup peanut oil

Mash ground beef with a fork in a large frying pan. Add cumin, onion, salt, pepper and garlic. Brown over medium heat. Drain and set aside. In small bowl, mix flour and egg to make a paste. Place one egg roll skin on flat surface (cover other skins with slightly damp cloth until used.) Brush all edges of skin with paste mixture. Place one tablespoon of meat mixture in center of skin. Fold skin in half and press edges together. Heat oil in large frying pan at high heat. Place one samusa in oil and fry until golden brown (about three minutes). Remove and serve. Makes about 30.

JOLLOF RICE

6 pieces chicken or 1 1/2 pounds stew beef

1/2 teaspoon celery salt

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1/4 cup vegetable oil

1 medium onion, chopped

1/4 pound cubed ham

2 cubes beef or chicken bouillon

1/4 teaspoon ground red pepper

1/2 teaspoon dried thyme

- 1 1/2 cups water
- 6 ounces tomato paste
- 1 1/4 cups cooked rice
- 2 cups of any vegetable
- Garnish desired

Season meat with salt and pepper. In large frying pan, heat oil over medium heat for five minutes. Brown meat on both sides. Place meat in pot and set aside. Add onions and ham to frying pan and saute. Set aside. Add bouillon, red pepper, thyme, water and tomato paste to pot and stir. Simmer over low flame for 10 minutes. Add rice to frying pan and coat with oil. Add rice and vegetables to pot, stir well, and cover. Cook over low heat for 40 minutes. Makes about six servings.

VERMICELLI AND RAISINS

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 cups chopped vermicelli
- 2 cups hot water
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup chopped dates
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts

In a large frying pan, heat oil over medium heat. Add vermicelli and saute until light brown. Add hot water. Stir in all other ingredients. Cover, reduce heat to low, simmer, stirring occasionally for 10 minutes, or until all water is absorbed and vermicelli is tender.

William Carrino is a free-lance writer based in St. Petersburg, Fla.

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#ART:

Karamu feast Friday

The biggest celebration of Kwanzaa - Karamu - will be observed in New Orleans at 9 p.m. Friday in the Scheuering Room of Municipal Auditorium. It is free and open to the public. Guests are asked to bring a favorite dish of any kind except pork, which is restricted by religious beliefs of some participants. This most important night of the week-long celebration represents the harvest and people sharing the fruits of their labor.

GRAPHIC

GRAPHIC: ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT GUTHRIE [COLOR]

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: December 31, 1993

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December 27, 1993 Monday, NORTH SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION: CHICAGOLAND; Pg. 1; ZONE: N

LENGTH: 800 words

HEADLINE: KWANZAA KEEPS THE FAITH;
AFRICAN FESTIVAL GROWS IN STATURE

BYLINE: By Sonya C. Vann, Tribune Staff Writer.

BODY:

When it began in 1966, the African-American cultural celebration Kwanzaa was almost exclusively observed by cultural nationalists, Pan-Africanists or revolutionaries.

At that time, a year after the passage of the Voting Rights Act, the black establishment was eager to integrate, and to distance itself from the holiday that was then associated with a fringe element.

It was Dr. Maulana Ron Karenga who in 1965 had conceived the seven-day cultural festival while researching African traditions and history as a graduate student at UCLA.

The word "Kwanzaa" is a derivative of the Kiswahili word "kwanza" which means "first" and is part of the term "Matunda Ya Kwanza" or "first fruits." Karenga added the second "a" to distinguish the African-American holiday from the African harvest celebration.

Now, though the holiday is not religious in nature, it has been warmly embraced by the black church in recent years.

And so on Sunday, 20 African-American churches, along with business and civic groups, united to celebrate the beginning of the harvest holiday.

At Carter Temple CME Church, two drummers in African ceremonial dress led pastors and speakers wearing dashikis and flowing robes of finely woven African fabrics into the church.

Sunday's holiday, which celebrates unity, was planned by the Greater Grand Crossing Organizing Committee.

Rev. Booker Vance, of St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church, led the congregation in a salute to the red, black and green African-American national flag.

Children in kente cloth headwraps read the seven principles of Kwanzaa, the Nguzo Saba, as others lit candles which represent the successive days of the festival.

Why was the black church so hesitant in accepting a festival which touts values such as unity and economic solidarity?

"I think the black church often takes a serious look before it takes a serious leap," explained Rev. Henry Williamson Sr., pastor of Carter Temple, 7841 S. Wabash.

Speaking during the ceremony, Williamson said, "Unity never meant getting everybody to do everything just alike. Don't confuse unity with uniformity," he said, pointing to the multi-denominational group in the church.

The celebration continued later in the church basement with a feast, also part of the Kwanzaa ritual, and African dance and storytelling by griots.

As Kwanzaa was first celebrated by the intellectuals of the late 1960s Black Arts Movement, today's arts community is still a stronghold of the holiday.

Danny Diallo, artistic director and founder of Sundance Production Arts Institute, early Sunday held a small Kwanzaa celebration at his school before a day of ballet, African and jazz dance classes.

This week at the center, in addition to participation in an arts day camp, children will learn about and celebrate Kwanzaa at Sundance, 407 E. 25th St., Suite 202, at King Drive.

Williamson believes Kwanzaa gained mainstream acceptance because of the unifying nature of the Nguzo Saba.

The Nguzo Saba or Seven Principles of Kwanzaa are: Umoja (unity); Kujichagulia (self-determination); Ujima (collective work and responsibility); Ujamaa (cooperative economics); Nia (purpose); Kuumba (creativity); and Imani (faith).

"If you look at the principles, they could be applied to any people," he said.

And in a further sign of wider acceptance, Afrocentric chic has spread into the aisles of Marshall Field's where Kwanzaa accoutrements now are prominently displayed next to the Christmas decorations.

"The concern that I have is that it not become overly commercialized, where the apparel of Kwanzaa becomes more important than the meaning. The values ought to be discussed. The experience of the African-American in this country ought to be contemplated," said Sterling D. Plumpp, associate professor of African-American studies and English at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Plumpp credits Haki Madhubuti, a Chicago writer, activist and founder of Third World Press, with helping to propagate the celebration locally.

"Just like African-American History Month, Negro History Week as it was then, I thought that, culturally, Kwanzaa has done a similar thing: detangling African-Americans from the crass commercialism that has entrapped the rest of country, especially on Dec. 25," said Plumpp.

Plumpp, who said he is wary of icons of any sort, will celebrate Kwanzaa this week not by lighting candles or pouring libation to the ancestors.

Instead he will spend time with his daughter, 17-year-old Harriet Nzinga, a freshman at De Paul University named for Harriet Tubman and heroic African Queen Nzinga. "I'm also going to listen to some blues and reflect on some of the different ways we've talked about our oppression in this country," Plumpp said.

GRAPHIC: PHOTOS 5; PHOTO: Instructor Yirser Rahotep leads a yoga class Sunday at Sundance Production Arts Institute, where a small Kwanzaa celebration was held prior to a day of classes. The institute plans to mark the African-American holiday throughout the coming week. Tribune photo by Nancee E. Lewis.; PHOTO: Benjamin Lane, 7, listens to speeches addressing Kwanzaa at the Carter Temple CME Church. Tribune photo by Milbert Orlando Brown.; PHOTO: Drummers lead the "call to unity" during Kwanzaa festivities Sunday at the Carter Temple CME Church. Tribune photo by Milbert Orlando Brown.; PHOTO: Kimberly Washington-Pierce of Chicago takes part in a ballet class Sunday at Sundance Production Arts Institute, where children will learn about and celebrate Kwanzaa this week. Tribune photo by Nancee E. Lewis. (Southwest Sports Final edition, Southwest section, page 4.); PHOTO (color): Keeping the faith: Bernadette Hinds participates in a ballet class Sunday at Sundance Production Arts Institute in Chicago, one of many celebrations of the African-American holiday Kwanzaa this week. Tribune photo by Nancee E. Lewis. (News section, page 1.)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: December 27, 1993

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Orlando Sentinel Tribune

December 27, 1992 Sunday, 3 STAR

SECTION: FOOD; Pg. L6

LENGTH: 1104 words

HEADLINE: AFRICAN-AMERICANS CELEBRATE ORIGINS, ASPIRATIONS

BYLINE: By Karol V. Menzie Baltimore Sun

BODY:

Kwanzaa, which means "first fruits of the harvest" in Swahili, is a weeklong celebration of African-American culture that began Saturday. The tradition was established in the '60s by Maulana Karenga, a California professor of black studies, as an expression of cultural pride and a way of reminding African-Americans and other races of the strong and diverse origins of America's black populations.

Each day of the celebration focuses on an aspect of the Nguzo Saba, or principles for living, which Kwanzaa is intended to reinforce: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith.

Seven candles - one black, three red and three green - lighted as part of the celebration symbolize those principles. They are placed in a kinara, a seven-branched candleholder that symbolizes the continent and peoples of Africa.

On Thursday, the last day of the celebration, there is a feast called Karamu, which author Eric Copage, in his book Kwanzaa, calls "an opportunity for a confetti

storm of cultural expression: dance and music, readings, remembrances." In some families, Kwanzaa the meal brings unity through diversity, reflecting the experience of the many African cultures, as well as many other places where people of those cultures have lived.

"You can celebrate a different country of the African diaspora each day by cooking only foods of that country," Copage says in his book. "On the first night you might serve Jamaican dishes, on the second food from the American South, on the third African and so on . . . ending with a glorious all-out multinational banquet on the last night."

Yogurt-Sauced Chicken Curry

4 chicken breast halves, bone in, skin on
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 medium Granny Smith apple, cored and chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
1 tablespoon curry powder
1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
1 cup chicken broth, homemade or canned
1/3 cup dark raisins
1 ripe banana, peeled and sliced into 1/4 -inch-thick rounds 1/2 cup plain yogurt
1/2 cup chopped roasted cashews, rinsed to remove salt

In a medium bowl, sprinkle the chicken breast with the lemon juice; let stand at room temperature 30 minutes. Combine the flour, salt and pepper on a plate. Dredge the chicken breasts in the seasoned flour, shaking off any excess.

Heat the butter and oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken breasts and cook, turning once, until browned on both sides, about 5 minutes. With tongs, transfer the chicken breasts to a plate and set aside.

Add the onion and the apple to the skillet and cook, stirring often, until softened, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic, curry powder and cardamom, reduce the heat to medium, and stir for 1 minute. Stir in the chicken broth and raisins.

Return the chicken to a skillet and bring to a simmer.

Cook, covered, until the chicken breasts show no sign of pink at the bone when prodded with a sharp knife, about 20 minutes.

Add the banana and yogurt, and stir constantly just until heated through, about 1 minute. Do not boil.

Serve immediately, sprinkled with the cashews.

Makes 4 servings.

Recipe notes: This North African dish from Morocco is from Kwanzaa by Eric V. Copage (William Morrow, \$25). Copage collected the recipe from Audie Odum-Stallato, a New Jersey caterer and cooking teacher.

Kwanzaa Salad

2 cups cooked turkey, diced

1 cup celery, diced
2 red delicious apples, skin on, diced
1/4 cup golden raisins
1 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup finely chopped onion
4 to 6 cups salad greens
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup sour cream
1 tablespoon orange juice
4 navel oranges, peeled and sliced
2 purple onions, cut in rings

In a large bowl, combine turkey, celery, apples, raisins, salt and chopped onion. In a small bowl, combine mayonnaise, sour cream and orange juice. Mix well and pour over other ingredients. Toss gently to blend. To serve, place salad greens on plate, and spoon salad mixture on top. Arrange orange slices and onion rings around edge of plate.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Recipe note: This recipe was first published in Essence magazine.

Riz au Djon-Djon

1 ounce dried Haitian black mushrooms, or dried European-type mushrooms such as porcini
2 cups hot water
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 small onion, minced

1 garlic clove, minced
2 cups long-grain white rice
About 3 cups fresh or canned chicken stock
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme, or 1/4 teaspoon dried
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Place the dried mushrooms in a small bowl and cover with the hot water. Set aside for 30 minutes. Drain the mushrooms, strain the liquid and reserve. There should be about 1 cup.

In a heavy saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat.

Add the onion and garlic, and saute until the onion wilts. Add the rice and stir constantly.

Add the stock, mushrooms, thyme and salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil, cover and reduce the heat to very low. Cook for 20 to 30 minutes, or until the liquid is absorbed and the rice is

fluffy and tender.

Makes 6 servings.

Recipe notes: This dish is from *Cooking Caribe* by Christopher Idone with Helen McEachrane (Panache Press-Clarkson Potter, \$25). This Haitian dish is similar to risotto.

Corn Pudding

Corn oil
2 large eggs
1 (6-ounce) can evaporated milk
1/4 cup sugar
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1 (16-ounce) can creamed corn
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon unsalted butter or margarine

Lightly grease a 7-by-7-inch baking dish with corn oil. Heat oven to 350 F.

Beat the eggs and evaporated milk in a small bowl until blended.

Stir the sugar and cornstarch together in a small bowl and add them slowly to the egg mixture, beating constantly, until blended. Fold in the corn, salt and pepper.

Pour the mixture into the greased baking dish and dot with the butter.

Bake until the pudding is set and golden brown on top, about 1 hour. Serve hot from the dish.

Makes 8 servings.

Recipe notes: This dish is from *Sylvia's Soul Food* by Sylvia Woods with Christopher Styler (Hearst Books, \$17). Woods is a long-time Harlem restaurateur.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Copage's Kwanzaa guide.

PHOTO: Christopher Idone's *'Cooking Caribe'* (Panache Press-Clarkson Potter) is a good source for Kwanzaa recipes.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: May 15, 1993

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Chicago Sun-Times

December 26, 1992, SATURDAY , LATE SPORTS FINAL

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 3

LENGTH: 803 words

HEADLINE: Families Sow Traditions, Goals, Unity For Kwanzaa

SOURCE: Robert A. DavisRobert A. Davis

BYLINE: Minette McGhee

BODY:

For the Blackledge/Haskins/ Cummings/Brown/Gamble family, Kwanzaa is a spiritual and joyous celebration that brings together more than 70 aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

The gathering features poetry, dance, African clothing, African and gospel music, and a spread of soul food and African stew. And everyone, from 5-year-old Nzivga Nyree Brown to great-aunt Lillian Haskins, plays a role.

"For us, Kwanzaa is a rejuvenation, a rededication to African American people," said Ceasar Brown. "Each person identifies with a principle and has to interpret it into their own personal beliefs."

"We discuss the positive things, how we're going to better the future the following year," said his wife, Juanita Brown.

The celebration, inspired in her family by her mother, Juanita Haskins, has grown from 12 participants in 1972 to more than 70. This year, it will be held at the multicultural teachers' center run by sisters Juanita Brown and Donnamariea Gamble in Park Forest.

An estimated 13 million African Americans celebrate the holiday, created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga as a way to reaffirm African heritage and to strengthen family and community ties.

The holiday was derived from African harvest celebrations and from Kaawaida, a system of social and political thought based on tradition and reason. The word "Kwanzaa" is derived from the Swahili phrase "Matunda Ya Kwanza," or "first fruits."

The Nguzo saba, or seven principles of Kwanzaa, are Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity) and Imani (faith). They represent a sort of moral minimum of what's needed to rebuild and strengthen the black family.

The symbols of Kwanzaa are the kinara (a candle holder symbolizing continental Africans), the mishumaa saba (seven green, red and black candles representing the seven principles), the muhindi (ears of corn symbolizing children); the kikombe cha umoja (unity cup), the mkeka (a straw mat), the mazao (a basket of fruit and vegetables to symbolize the harvest), the Zawadi (gifts) and the African flag.

A libation, or ritual toast, is given to honor familial ancestors. And a candle symbolizing one of the principles is lit each day.

Throughout the day, participants extend the greeting, "Habari gani?" which is Swahili for "What is the news?" The response is that day's principle; for instance, "Umoja."

Generally, families choose one day of Kwanzaa to invite their friends, associates and relatives to their homes for a celebration. For the Browns this year it will be the fourth day, or "Ujamaa." There also are many public celebrations, hosted by churches, schools and community organizations.

The celebration of Kwanzaa has become part of a larger movement toward embracing Afrocentric ideals, but many misconceptions still remain about the holiday.

"There's a lot of confusion with some people that Kwanzaa is a replacement for Christmas. But it's not," said Conrad Worrill, chairman of the National Black United Front, which hosts the city's largest Kwanzaa celebration each year at Kennedy-King College.

"Kwanzaa can be looked at in a cultural context. So people who are Christian, or Muslim, or Buddhist **can** participate in Kwanzaa," he said.

Gifts are given, **"but the emphasis is on what have you done, what commitments you made the last Kwanzaa season and how did you meet those commitments throughout the year? This determines the reciprocity of what is given to you,"** Worrill said.

"Kwanzaa is a time for coming home in the physical and cultural sense," said Karenga during a pre Kwanzaa celebration at the South Shore Cultural Center on Dec. 19. The event, which featured dancers, vendors and a workshop on how to celebrate the holiday, was sponsored by It's Kwanzaa Time and drew a crowd of

more than 4,000 people.

"It is a time for sober reflection, a time to raise the question: Who am I, am I really who I am, and am I all I could be?" Karenga said.

For Juanita Sawyers of Chicago's South Side, Kwanzaa offers a welcome departure from the commercialism of Christmas and a way to educate her niece and nephew, Janie and Julian Bates, about their heritage.

"Christmas has gotten to the point that it's not a celebration of the birth of Christ," said Sawyers, who began celebrating Kwanzaa three years ago. "Kwanzaa is a celebration for African Americans that has an appreciation for the family, and for older members of the family. It's much more important, I think, than celebrating Christmas." The National Black United Front's Kwanzaa celebration, called the Karamu Ya Imani, or the feast of faith, will be held from noon to 5 p.m. Friday at Kennedy-King College, 6800 S. Wentworth.

GRAPHIC: Nia Nikole Gamble (left) and Deborah Roberts sing an African song during a pre-Kwanzaa event at the University of Chicago earlier this week. Shanika Hubbard (left) and Nzivga-Nyree Brown, both 5, watch the ceremonies during the U. of C. event.

LANGUAGE: English

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LOAD-DATE-MDC: December 31, 1992

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The Ethnic NewsWatch
Sacramento Observer

December 9, 1992

SECTION: Vol. 30; No. 2; Pg. F3

LENGTH: 806 words

HEADLINE: Kwanzaa Gains As African American Holiday: An Estimated Five-Million People Now Celebrate The Seven-Day Observance

BODY:

Kwanzaa Gains As African American Holiday: An Estimated Five-Million People Now Celebrate The Seven-Day Observance

Kwanzaa is a non-religious African American holiday that was created in 1966 by Maulana Karenga, a leading African American scholar and educator who achieved prominence during the Black Power movement of the 1960's.

An estimated five million people now celebrate the holiday.

The name for Kwanzaa comes from the Swahili language of East Africa. It means "first" and is intended to express the "first fruits of the harvest" concept -- a major foundation for celebrations in traditional African societies.

Karenga drew elements from a variety of different African societies and festival practices to create something uniquely African American in content and expression.

Kwanzaa is a seven day celebration, beginning on December 26 and concluding on January 1.

Although Kwanzaa is not a religious holiday, it is intended to be very spiritual. The overriding idea, woven throughout the ceremonial practices, is one of unity and sharing among family, community and all descendants of Africa, no matter where in the world they may be.

CEREMONIAL OBJECTS

The Kwanzaa ceremony begins with a collection of ceremonial objects which are used to create an altar-like display. Each object has a symbolic meaning and the display remains in place throughout the seven days of Kwanzaa as the centerpiece for a daily ceremony.

Mkeka -- Straw mat symbolizing the foundation of African American culture on which all the other ceremonial objects of Kwanzaa are displayed.

Kinara -- Candelabra symbolizing the continent of Africa and our African ancestors that holds the seven Kwanzaa candles, one for each day of the celebration.

Kikombe -- "Unity cup" that is used to pour libation for our ancestors and to share the Kwanzaa spirit of oneness with friends and family.

Mishumaa Saba -- Assortment of seven candles -- (3) red, (1) black (3) green -- to illuminate the principles of Kwanzaa. The colors are significant and echo the meanings of the traditional African American flag. Green represents the Motherland and hope. Black represents unity and our race. And, red represents the blood of African people. The candles are placed with the green to the left, the red to the right and the black in the center. They are lighted consecutively over the seven days of Kwanzaa.

Mazao -- Bowl of fruits and vegetables that symbolize the rewards of collective labor.

Muhindi -- Ears of Indian -- corn one for each child in the family.

Zawadi -- Small gifts that acknowledge and reward the achievements of the recipient and which are normally presented on the last day of Kwanzaa.

THE CEREMONY

Family and friends participating in the ceremony will gather around the celebration objects each day. At each occasion, the person leading the celebration will add one candle to the Kinara and light it. (This can be done at any point in the ceremony. On the last day, there will be seven lighted candles.)

The ceremony itself is divided into several segments.

First, everyone is formally welcomed to the celebration.

Then, there is a period of "remembering" where celebrants share a reflection about their culture. Segment three is a period of reassessment and recommitment. At the end of the ceremony, there is a period of rejoicing.

A key part of rejoicing is the passing round the Kikombe or unity cup. Whomever is leading the ceremony takes the cup and pours a small amount into the earth as "libation" for the ancestors. They then take a drink and pass the kikombe around to everyone else to share.

In general, all of the discussion should be guided by the principle for that particular day of Kwanzaa, drawn from a list called the "Nguzo Saba" or "seven principles."

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES

Umoja (unity) -- To strive for and maintain unity in the family, in the community, in the nation and within the race.

Kujichagulia (self determination) -- To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves instead of being defined, named, created and spoken for by others.

Ujima (collective work and responsibility) -- To build and maintain our communities together and to make our sisters' and brothers' problems our problems and solve them together.

Ujamaa (cooperative economics) -- To build and maintain African American economic power through the creation and support of Black businesses.

Nia (purpose) -- To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

Kuumba (creativity) -- To always do as much as we can, in any way we can, to beautify and benefit the African American community.

Imani (faith) -- To believe in the people, in the teachers and in the leaders of the African American community.

ETHNIC-GROUP: African American

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE-MDC: March 10, 1993

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Chicago Tribune

December 30, 1991, Monday, NORTH SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION: CHICAGOLAND; Pg. 1; ZONE: C

LENGTH: 853 words

HEADLINE: After 25 years, Kwanzaa reaps harvest of celebrants

BYLINE: By Allan Johnson.

BODY:

"You celebrate Ka-what?"

That was the response Iris Dunmore used to get whenever she told people that, instead of celebrating Christmas, she observed Kwanzaa, the much newer, seven-day African-American festival that starts Dec. 26.

"Well, the first time I did it (about 20 years ago), people didn't know too much about Kwanzaa, and everyone was into Christmas," said Dunmore, 41. "It was unheard of. So I had to kind of like pave the way as far as the celebration went."

Now, on the 25th anniversary of the holiday created by an African-American activist and theorist, Dunmore does not encounter as much confusion. Even if they don't know the different meanings behind Kwanzaa, more blacks are at least aware that the festival exists, she said.

"People are now more into it, and there's a little more hype, I guess you would say," said Dunmore, a newspaper distributor who lives on Chicago's South Side.

"People already know what you're talking about, and they are kind of like pulled into it."

But not all African-Americans are drawn toward Kwanzaa, which is based on African traditions of celebrating the first fruits of the harvest. And many who celebrate Kwanzaa also celebrate Christmas.

"Honestly, I've never heard about of it," conceded Derrick Anderson, 34. "It's news to me. But I would like to find out more about it."

In recent years, there has been a spate of books to help African-Americans

celebrate the holiday. There are also kits that contain a candleholder, candles, a "unity cup," and a special ceremonial mat.

"I think there's a whole Afro-centric movement going around in America, particularly as it relates to education," said Conrad Worrill, chairman of the National Black United Front, which deals with issues that affect African-Americans.

"And I think we have a reaffirmation of our African traditions and African heritage that's on the rise, even though the conditions in the African-American community are devastating."

Willie Dixon, staff historian for the Du Sable Museum of African American History, said that white people are also finding something positive in Kwanzaa. "It's an alternative to something they've been taught all of their lives," he said.

"How do you think they got ahold of jazz? They found something there. They find something in Kwanzaa that has much more substance than Christmas."

Dixon said that, although the origin of Kwanzaa "has nothing to do with Africa or religion," the festival is rich in both.

"Black people have for a long time been dealing with Kwanzaa, the collective sharing, the respect for their elders and these types of things," he said. "Africa is steeped in that."

The seven days of Kwanzaa touch on aspects that make up the Nguzo Saba (seven principles), upon which one should live one's life. The principles are represented by the lighting each day of seven candles (mishumaa saba).

Those principles, one of which is celebrated each day starting Dec. 26 through Jan. 1, are Umoja (unity in Swahili), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity) and Imani (faith).

It is those beliefs that **Dunmore** wanted to share with her three daughters, who are now ages 17 to 19.

"I wanted my kids to have a celebration that had a little more substance" than Christmas, Dunmore said as she was holding a Kwanzaa ritual party for at least 25 people. "Something that can be practiced throughout the year. Something that would bring us as a people together."

The ritual was created in 1966 by black activist Dr. Maulana Karenga, who was looking, as many African-Americans were during the '60s, for a way to express cultural identity.

Kwanzaa is derived from the Swahili word kwanza, which means "first"; it is part of the phrase matunda ya kwanza, meaning "first fruits." Karenga based the holiday on the African celebration of bringing in the harvests of a season.

Iris Dunmore's family never observed Christmas, but most of their friends did. Dunmore said her kids questioned the celebration of Kwanzaa.

"It took a couple of years for me to get them into the idea that, 'No, this is not what I want to celebrate. I want you all to celebrate Kwanzaa, and this is how we're going to do it,' " she said.

For children, "Kwanzaa de-emphasizes the commercialization of the traditional holiday season," said Worrill. "The gift-giving in Kwanzaa is based around what young people will strive for during the coming season. And the gifts that are given to children are educational in nature."

Gifts, many of which are handmade ("We give of ourselves; that's what's important," Alice Smith-Jones, a Kwanzaa celebrant, said), include knitted sweaters and hats, and books on African history, customs and lore.

Ayana Bush, 8, sang at the Kwanzaa demonstration at Bethen Senior Services on the Northwest Side. She said it was "a special (time) that you should celebrate. . . . I like it because it's for African-Americans.

"That's my daddy's favorite holiday. My daddy doesn't like other holidays. He says he's a Kwanzaa man."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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St. Louis Post-Dispatch

December 9, 1991, MONDAY, FIVE STAR Edition

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 2

LENGTH: 222 words

HEADLINE: RULES TO LIVE BY ... SEVEN PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY TO
A MORE HARMONIOUS; SOCIETY

BODY:

The Nguzo Saba, or Seven Principles, are the heart and soul of Kwanzaa. As explained in "The African American Holiday of Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community & Culture" by Dr. Maulana Karenga (The University of Sankore Press, \$9.95), the principles are: Umoja (unity): To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race. Kujichagulia (self-determination): To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves instead of being defined, named, created for and spoken for by others. Ujima (collective work and responsibility): To build and maintain our community together and make our sisters' and brothers' problems our problems and to solve them together. Ujamaa (cooperative economics): To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together. Nia (purpose): To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness. Kuumba (creativity): To do always as much as we can in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than when we inherited it. Imani (faith): To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

LANGUAGE: English

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Modern Maturity

December, 1991

SECTION: Vol. 34 ; No. 6 ; Pg. 92; ISSN: 0026-8046

LENGTH: 670 words

HEADLINE: A family festival: Kwanzaa: an African-American original.

BYLINE: Wibecan, Ken

BODY:

Many cultures have contributed to the evolution of the December holiday season. It began with winter solstice rites--the Roman Saturnalia, the Teutonic Yule, the Druid celebrations. Hanukkah celebrates the Maccabees' defeat of the Syrians in 164 B.C.E. Then there is Christmas, a major religious holiday and a commercial bonanza.

The newest addition to the lot is Kwanzaa, a colorful African-American celebration of family, community and culture.

The word Kwanzaa comes from a phrase that means "first fruits" of the harvest in Swahili. The seven-day festival, which begins on December 26 and ends on New Year's Day, has been steadily growing in popularity since it originated in 1966.

"This is a holiday based on traditions surrounding the first fruits; it adopts practices prevalent throughout Africa," says Kwanzaa creator Maulana Karenga, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Black Studies at California State University, Long Beach. "First-fruit celebrations are a bringing together of a living human harvest, a time for renewing and strengthening the bonds between people. Kwanzaa teaches respect for the family, for the community and our traditions. Its values are one of our contributions to the best of human culture."

The heart and soul of Kwanzaa are the Nguzo Saba (seven principles)--guidelines for year-round living: Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity) and Imani (faith). Each day of the festival is dedicated to one of those principles.

Every evening of Kwanzaa the family gathers to discuss the principle for the day. A candle is lit and placed in the seven-branch kinara (candleholder) to symbolize giving light and life to the seven principles and to the ancient African

concept of raising up light to lessen both spiritual and intellectual darkness. Small gifts--preferably handcrafted--are exchanged.

There is a seriousness of purpose; a sense of belonging not just to a family, but to a culture with rich ancient traditions. "Kwanzaa's most important lessons are for children because it gets them away from the commercial aspects of the season and helps them emphasize the spiritual," says Cerise Richardson, a Long Beach, California, poet, dancer, and single parent of a four-year-old. "During Kwanzaa I sit down with my son, Nathaniel, explain each principle and let him know that it is not just for one day, but is to be incorporated into his entire life."

According to Karenga, Kwanzaa is now celebrated by some 15 million people in the U.S., Africa, Canada, the Caribbean and parts of Europe. Although it contains many spiritual elements, it is not a religious but a cultural holiday that is observed by people of all faiths.

"I like Kwanzaa because it involves the children and celebrates our ancestors," says Angela Kinamore, poetry editor of Essence magazine in New York and mother of three. "I've been celebrating it for three years and I intend to continue; I think it's important to instill those principles in our children at an early age."

The observance's noncommercial aspect has made an impression on many people, including Kenyette Adrine-Robinson, writer-in-residence at Kent State University's Department of Pan-African Studies and mother of 14-year-old Jua. "I have been celebrating Kwanzaa since 1971," she says. "Christmas just feeds the merchants, so I go with the holiday of African-American origin. Most of the people I know celebrate it."

While most Kwanzaa activities are family affairs, on December 31 family and friends join with other members of the community for the karamu (feast). This final event is particularly festive. The karamu site is decorated in the rich red, black and green that has come to symbolize Africa, adults and children wear colorful African garments, and all present contribute dishes to the karamu table.

It is a time for good fellowship, a time for learning, a time for sharing.

GRAPHIC: Photograph

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LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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March 26, 1991

SECTION: LOCAL NEWS; Section E; Page 1

LENGTH: 1328 words

HEADLINE: KWANZAA SEVEN SAVING DAYS Kwanzaa festivities mix hope, cultural histories, principles for daily use

BYLINE: By Valerie Boyd STAFF WRITER

BODY:

Terri Lott believes Kwanzaa saved her life.

Two years ago, Ms. Lott says, she considered killing herself and her children. "I was too depressed to live," she says.

She had no job, no sense of identity and no hope.

But then she got a part-time job as a community outreach worker and discovered the seven principles of Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith.

In Kiswahili (an East African language), those principles are umoja, kujichagulia, ujima, ujamaa, nia, kuumba and imani.

One of the seven principles (known as the Nguzo Saba) is stressed on each of the seven days of Kwanzaa - an annual African-American holiday celebration that begins today and lasts until Jan. 1.

Derived from the phrase "matunda ya kwanza," or "first fruits," Kwanzaa is neither an African holiday nor a black Christmas.

It is an African-American cultural celebration that draws on African harvest festival traditions, such as giving thanks for the first crops of the year. For African-Americans, it is a time to give thanks for their heritage.

Maulana Karenga, chairman of the Department of Black Studies at California State University in Long Beach, founded Kwanzaa in 1966 to help "black people rescue and reconstruct our history and culture."

Kwanzaa "is not about speaking the words in Kiswahili," says Folami Prescott,

an educational consultant who trained Ms. Lott for her job. "It's about living the principles year-round."

"Before I got into my culture, I wanted to be like 'The Brady Bunch,' " Ms. Lott says.

"I would get so depressed because I couldn't have what they had. I didn't have a husband with a briefcase or a nice house in the suburbs."

What Ms. Lott had was a husband addicted to crack, four children who depended on her to hold the family together, and a pink slip from the crashing Eastern Airlines.

"I was so depressed, I wanted to die," she says. "Now, my cultural awareness makes me want to live to be 200 - if only so I can catch up on my history."

The 30-year-old Ms. Lott, who is now separated from her husband, plans to enroll in college for the first time next fall. And she's looking for another job to supplement her income so she can get off food stamps.

"Now I don't care about living in the suburbs," she says. "Now I know it's not about where you live - it's how you live."

Ms. Lott and her children still live in the Joyland Park community near Carver Homes, a public housing project in Southeast Atlanta. The community is still poor, drugs are still widely available and black men with no place else to be stand rooted to every other street corner.

These men may not know much about history. But they do know that today is the first day of Kwanzaa. Ms. Lott has made sure of that.

"The guys on the corner don't celebrate Kwanzaa. But every time they see me, they ask: 'What's the news today?' And Kwanzaa time or not, I always talk about the principles."

If Ms. Lott's street-corner friends were Kwanzaa celebrants, they might greet her with "Habari gani?" That's Kiswahili for "What's new?" and the traditional salutation for the estimated 25,000 to 35,000 black Atlantans who celebrate Kwanzaa, according to local organizers.

Now marking its 25th anniversary, Kwanzaa has grown from a small observance among black nationalists to a holiday recognized by an estimated 15 million people. That figure includes people of African descent in the Caribbean, Africa and Europe.

This weekend, more than 400 people are expected to descend on Jekyll Island,

Ga., for the second national Kwanzaa celebration, sponsored by the National Black Wholistic Society. The festival will feature African dancers, storytelling and health, fitness and cultural workshops.

Closer to home, the Metro-Atlanta Kwanzaa Association is coordinating numerous local activities. Kwesi James, publicity director of the association, estimates that 300 people per night will attend the events.

Others - including Ms. Lott and her family - will also celebrate at home.

Ms. Lott and her children - 13-year-old Daimon, 10-year-old Kenyatta, 5-year-old Tiara and 20-month-old Dwain - have decorated a table in their apartment with various symbols, including a seven-branched candleholder called a kinara. One candle will be lighted each day as the family members tell how they've lived the day's principle in the past year and how they will live it better in the year to come.

"I live the principles by trying to obey my mom and going to school every day," says Daimon, who Ms. Lott says was rebellious and puberty-stricken a year ago.

"I don't fight with my sisters anymore either," he says, "because now I know they're black queens."

Daimon learned the lessons of Kwanzaa not just from his mother but from a whole cottage industry of Kwanzaa paraphernalia.

African-American bookstores nationwide sell Kwanzaa cards and books, and several small bands have recorded and marketed Kwanzaa records and tapes on a limited basis. One product in the works is a Kwanzaa kit, which will include a kinara and instructions for novices.

Some see the creeping commercialization as a good thing. At least it gets the word out.

"For anything to be successful in America is for it to become commercialized," says Eric Copage, author of a new cookbook called "Kwanzaa: An African-American Celebration of Culture and Cooking."

"What's important is that we keep the underlying values, the philosophical bedrock of Kwanzaa," he says.

Ms. Prescott believes African-Americans should use the mainstream media more aggressively to educate folks about Kwanzaa's principles.

"Kwanzaa's popularity is not growing like I think it should have by now," she says. "I've never seen it on 'The Cosby Show.' "

But Kwanzaa was mentioned in passing on last Thursday's holiday episode of "A Different World," another Bill Cosby-created sitcom.

That was a start, say Kwanzaa proponents.

"If Spike Lee addressed it in his films, if there were Kwanzaa raps, if jazz artists produced Kwanzaa music, if we could get Stevie Wonder to do a Kwanzaa song, that would take it to a whole other level."

Kwanzaa is primarily a black thing, but some non-blacks also mark the holiday.

"Kwanzaa is traditionally an African-American celebration, but I think the principles are universal," says the Rev. Daniel Webster Aldridge Jr., pastor of the Thurman-Farmer-Ellington Church, Unitarian Universalist, which had a pre-Kwanzaa program Sunday.

"I see black people being the vanguard of political, social and cultural thinking in the United States," he says, so if whites can draw inspiration from Kwanzaa, so be it.

"But before we can have world unity," Ms. Prescott says, "we have to start at home." She prefers to think of Kwanzaa as a cultural teaching tool, a uniquely African-American celebration, "a holiday we can call our own."

Tracey Ani is among the millions of African-Americans who don't celebrate Kwanzaa.

An administrative assistant at the Fulton County Arts Council, Ms. Ani says she was only exposed to the holiday last year. But, she says, "the principles are things I do take to heart, and they're principles that a lot of us grow up with, especially in black families."

Mr. Copage agrees. He recalls a childhood incident in which he was told by a teacher that he'd never make it as a writer. When he told his grandmother about it, she said: "Don't ever let anyone else determine what you can be or do."

That, Mr. Copage says, was kujichagulia (self-determination) in action. not color photo: Terri Lott (seated at center) says Kwanzaa saved her life. She is with her family (clockwise from top left standing) Daimon Thomas, Billie Walker, Tiara Lott, Carlus Walker, Dwain Lott and Kenyatta Lott. / Photos by KIMBERLY SMITH / Staff not color photo: Folami Prescott shows some of the symbols of Kwanzaa. The seven candles are symbolic of the seven principles on which Kwanzaa is based.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: March 29, 1992

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The Washington Times

December 26, 1990, Wednesday, Final Edition

SECTION: Part B; METROPOLITAN; Pg. B3

LENGTH: 565 words

HEADLINE: Blacks hope Kwanzaa's values take root, inspire city's youths

BYLINE: Jonetta Rose Barras; THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BODY:

Some D.C. residents are hoping this year's celebration of Kwanzaa can reintroduce the city's black youths to values that can help stem the growing violence in the black community.

"Kwanzaa serves as an introduction to the culture and the need for a values system that allows children to successfully deal with their peers and peer pressure. . . . We are faced with an increase in violence and resurgence of racism. . . . Times like these, people automatically turn to those things that worked for them in the past," said Anthony Browder, head of the Institute for Karmic Guidance, a nonprofit organization that conducts tours and lectures.

A Kiswahili word meaning "the first fruits of the harvest," Kwanzaa was started in 1966 by Maulana Karenga, chairman of the black studies department at California State Long Beach.

The weeklong holiday, which begins today and continues through Jan. 1, is celebrated by nearly 18 million blacks. It is a synthesis of African mythology, culture and traditions and not meant to be a substitute for Christmas. Some blacks celebrate it instead of the Christian holiday; others observe both.

The rites of Kwanzaa include reciting the principle of the day - there are seven, called the Nguzo Saba - lighting a red, green or black candle in a seven-branch candlelabrum (kinara) and drinking from the "unity cup" (Kikombe).

The candle holder and cup rest on a mkeka (straw mat) and ears of corn represent each child in a family.

Many persons interviewed for this article said this year's celebration is critical, considering the number of youths who are dropping out of school or becoming victims of rising crime and drug-related violence.

In the District, 66 juveniles were arrested this year on homicide charges while 31 others were victims. Last year, 40 youths were killed and 63 were arrested on homicide charges.

"Drawing on the principle of unity," said Mamadi Nyasuma, a local poet and lecturer, "we must begin forming alliances outside the cultural community, bringing people together so we are all acting as an African community. When the children get out of line, even if they are not your own, you do something about it."

Mr. Nyasuma said that nationally and locally the Afrocentric education movement could be used to generate more interest in Kwanzaa.

"They [youths] are very much into this [Afrocentrism]," he said, noting the African influences in haircuts, medallions and other clothing. "It is another opportunity to tap into them and show them the ongoing values about ourselves. . . I mean, Frosty the Snowman and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer are good, but that does not move into our community after it's over."

Lawrence Guyot, a political organizer in the District, said it will take more than an annual holiday to affect youths and bring about changes in the black community.

The crisis confronting blacks requires renewed faith in leaders and in the political system, and an effort to unite what may seem to be opposing groups, he said.

There needs to be a special effort to link up with the church.

"We should not be choosing between [different religious] leadership. . . . I am saying that, to anyone who is truly committed to the empowerment of black people, there is really no reason to feel the need to attack each other," Mr. Guyot said.

GRAPHIC: Chart, KWANZAA SCHEDULE, By The Washington Times

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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The Washington Post

December 20, 1979, Thursday, Final Edition

SECTION: District Weekly; DC 3

LENGTH: 1261 words

HEADLINE: Kwanzaa Holiday Helps Preserve African Cultural Heritage

BYLINE: By Joann Stevens, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

On a crisp, sunny weekend afternoon, Winona Abayomi-Cole and her 2-year-old godson Shawn attend a pre-Kwanzaa lecture at the Museum of African Art.

Embracing Shawn closer, Abayomi-Cole smiles knowingly. She is just recently learning about the holiday, but finds the Kwanzaa rituals as old as her African ancestors.

Her father is West African, her mother American, she said. As the lecturer talked about pouring libations to honor the ancestors, a childhood picture of her African uncles pouring libations on the floor at the family table in Northwest Washington suddenly popped into her mind, she explained.

"I remember as a child I used to think, 'what are they doing?'" she chuckled.

"It's important to mix the cultures," Abayomi-Cole said. "Just as Jewish Americans do in observing Hanukkah, or Irish kids in making a big thing out of St. Patrick's Day. It's important for kids to be given a background."

Kwanzaa, the seven-day, black American holiday celebrating the spiritual and cultural heritage of the African family, begins Dec. 26. But in schoolrooms, museums and homes all across the United States, children have already joined their families to sing the praises of black tradition.

"Umoja is unity," chorus 150 children in Kiswahili at the Malcolm X School at Alabama Street and Congress Place SE.

In turn they complete the seven principles of Kwanzaa.

Kujichagulia is self-determination. Ujima is collective work and responsibility. Ujamaa is cooperative economics. Nia is purpose. Kuumba is creativity. Imani is faith.

Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by black nationalist Ron Karenga. The holiday borrows ancient African customs from traditional harvesting ceremonies celebrated throughout the continent, said Amina Dickerson, educational director at the Museum of African art. But there is no ceremony in Africa called Kwanzaa, nor should Kwanzaa be considered a black Christmas, said Dickerson referring to two common misbeliefs about the holiday.

Rather, Kwanzaa is an everyday lifestyle that is celebrated in the annual holiday. The weeklong ceremony is similar to Odewira and Afahye -- the 40-day harvest and new-year celebrations observed in Ghana in October -- said Kojo Fosu, an associate professor of art at Howard University.

Fosu, who has lived in the United States for nine years and is married to a black American, said he celebrates Kwanzaa "with the same kind of respect as I would celebrate Odewira and Afahye in my own country. It shares the same kinds of (African) concepts . . . the idea of togetherness, the hope of improving on the year before . . . that endurance must increase, the family must increase.

"(Kwanzaa) is an important contribution to black America. We need to commemorate in terms of our history."

That the holiday is only 13 years old is "insignificant," said Agye Akoto, program director of Nationhouse Watoto School at 503 Park Rd. NW.

"Everything has a beginning. The significance of Kwanzaa goes much farther than Ron Karenga. I felt he spoke to a need being felt by the people," said Akoto.

That need, said Akoto, was to establish an American tradition exclusively for black people.

On Dec. 26, families across the U.S. will take time each day to gather around the Kwanzaa table and ask, "**Habari gani?** (what's happening?)" Lighting a candle, each family member will then answer the greeting by discussing the principle of the day.

"Kujichagulia is self-determination," a group of fifth graders recite at the Malcolm X School. Individually, they promise: I am determined to finish my work. I am determined to stop clowning in class.

At Ujamaa Sule in Northwest Washington, **Baba Zulu**, the director and founder of the school, signals his daughter Akina to light the candles representing the Nguzo Saba (the seven principles) of Kwanzaa.

Then, turning to the children and teachers standing around the table of Kwanzaa symbols, Zulu softly asks the children to sing.

"Watoto (children), the Kwanzaa Song."

The air erupts with the rhythmic thundering of drums that the boys beat with reckless abandon. The room swells with the sound of childish voices.

To a melody slightly reminiscent of the spiritual "Wade in the Water," they sing:

"Kwanzaa is a holiday.

Kwanzaa, Kwanzaa, Kwanzaa, is an African holiday.

Seven candles for seven days.

Seven special days for Africa."

In Kwanzaa, universal human values are personalized in rituals that are meaningful to the African heritage, observers of the holiday said.

The mkeka -- straw mat -- represents the foundation of the African family. The kinara stands for African ancestors. A mishummaa (candle) is lit daily, as the principle of the day is illuminated in one's life. Muhindi (corn) represents the seeds of fertility or the children in a family. Mazao -- crops -- represent the fruits of labor. Zawadi -- gifts -- the rewards of achievement.

Out of the kikombe -- unity cup -- juice or wine is poured on the ground in honor of the ancestors. Following the libation, the leader drinks from the cup and exclaims "Harambee!" meaning, let's all pull together. The family members agree, repeating the ritual.

Observed with dignity and solemnity, the Afro-American holiday encourages family unity, creativity and self-respect, said Zulu. Children participate in the ritual with their parents. Zawadi (gifts) are usually homemade. And on the last day, a karamu (feast) is extended to the community.

"I think the reason (Kwanzaa) has stayed alive is it is more meaningful to us," Zulu said.

Media reports have estimated that a small percentage of the black population celebrates Kwanzaa annually.

"Most all of the brothers and sisters here go home and celebrate Kwanzaa with their mothers and fathers. It's about what's in your heart," said Zulu.

Though Kwanzaa -- the word means first -- evolved from the decade that also

produced affirmative action and dashikis, it alone has apparently transcended class, religion, culture and politics in its appeal.

It is celebrated by Christians, black nationalists, the young and old, black and brown, street activists and brahmins of city hall.

"Initially, Kwanzaa was something observed by grass-roots community organizations. It has since spread and become more widely accepted by members of the community," said Rasafik Weusi, director of the Kwanzaa coordinating committee of the United Black Community (UBC), a coalition of six community organizations.

Last year, then Mayor-elect Marion Barry and his wife Effi gave a Kwanzaa disco party to commemorate Ujima and to collect donations of Christmas toys for needy children. In Weusi's way of thinking, "that's an example of the commercialization of Kwanzaa," the kind of thing Kwanzaa purists try to discourage. "That's one of the reasons the planning committee was formed -- to fully inform the community of the basic concepts of Kwanzaa. It (Kwanzaa) was begun to focus our people on our cultural roots," said Weusi.

In the weeks leading up to Kwanzaa, the UBC is distributing a Kwanzaa brochure to help people understand the basic concepts of the holiday as they go through the ritual.

"People with different (cultural) perspectives are going to bring their own perspectives to Kwanzaa," said Akoto, commenting on the commercialization of Kwanzaa. "What needs to be reaffirmed is the purpose of Kwanzaa. We need to try to reassess who we are."

GRAPHIC: Picture 1, Akina Zulu, 8, lights a Kwanzaa mishummaa (candle) at the Ujamaa Sule at 8th and Q streets NW. Photos by Craig Herndon -- The Washington Post; Picture 2, Students at the Ujamaa Sule play drums as part of the Kwanzaa celebration.;Picture 3, Winona Abayomi-Cole and her godson at the pre-Kwanzaa seminar. By Kenneth Stancel for The Washington Post

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH