With the coming of the spring semester, we eagerly prepare for the spring shows put on by each of the Black Cultural Center’s student expression ensembles.

Starting off the rotation would be The Black Thought Collective, our academic group committed to dialogue that will foster intellectual enlightenment, as well as educational opportunities beyond the classroom, specifically experienced through an Afrocentric perspective. They will be offering a symposium to any and all interested in learning more about the Afro-Latin diaspora as it pertains to Puerto Rico and its African descended people. Those featured in the presentation will be Keturah Nix, Schane Coker, and Jessica Ward, as well as student coordinator Arneetrice Thompson, and Scholar-in-residence Casarae Gibson.

The scholar-in-residence for this enlightening ensemble gave remarks about the upcoming show and its featured members. In regards to what she hopes is taken away from the symposium, Gibson declares, “It would be to learn more about the African descendent presence in Puerto Rico, and its contributions to not only Puerto Rican politics, but American politics.” This symposium would be taking place in the Black Cultural Center’s multipurpose room at 2PM on March 28th, which is a Wednesday.

Also coming up on the Performance Arts Ensemble roster is the Black Voices of Inspiration with their 39th Annual Spring Concert. Dr. Twana A. Harris, the full time Artist in Residence, looks forward to putting forth her 7th spring show, adding to the illustrious performances she has put on every year since her residency in 2005. “The audience can expect creative story telling through the use of music and drama,” Harris states. “They can expect a wonderful live band, powerful singers, and a story line that will challenge you to think!”
BVOI’s Spring Production, “A FINE LINE”, tells the story of Reverend Thomas Porter as he deals with the temptations of reading a book that reveals all life’s events and the consequences that could follow alongside his family, friends, and some unexpected influences. Student Coordinator Danielle Briggs believes that the production is very thought provoking. “It will make you consider how the storyline can be connected to your life. It will make you question what you would do if you had the opportunities of the main characters.” This performance will take place on Sunday April 1st at 3PM, four days after the Black Thought Collective’s Symposium, in the Loeb Playhouse.

Be sure to mark your calendars for both of these enlightening and impassioned events. All of our students are working hard to bring you a rousing presentation that will open your mind to enlivening concepts and ideas. Anyone who comes looking for something moving will not leave the place disappointed. That is a promise.
Purdue University’s Black Cultural Center will be hosting the 2012 Association for Black Culture Centers (ABCC) 22nd conference in the fall, October 22-27. The ABCC is an organization that holds strongly to their mission “to celebrate, promote and critically examine the culture of people of African descent, through the institutionalizing of Black and Multicultural Centers to enhance individual, community and global development.” In addition to having “more than seven hundred colleges and universities that are members or affiliates in all fifty states, and in the Caribbean and West Africa.” The ABCC is increasingly involving historically and predominantly Black colleges and universities, museums, community centers, as well as Multicultural Centers and Offices. The BCC director, Renee Thomas explained why and how Purdue became the host of the national conference, “Purdue submitted a bid to host the conference in May, 2011. We were thrilled our proposal was accepted. The primary reason for Purdue’s selection is that our Black Cultural Center is one of the premiere cultural centers in the nation. Hosting the conference will provide conference participants the opportunity to visit the Purdue BCC facility as part of the conference program. Purdue is also one of the largest collegiate conference programs in the nation and we have the capacity to provide high quality meeting facilities. We are confident that with advanced planning Purdue will make the 2012 ABCC conference an educationally enriching and memorable experience for all attendees.” She also added her expectations and plans for the conference with, “Over the next several months Purdue will be working with the ABCC Board of Directors to establish the conference theme and to send out a call for paper abstracts. I am looking forward to Purdue faculty, staff and students responding to the Call for Papers. It will be a unique opportunity for current Purdue representatives to present at a national conference, even if students choose not present, there will be an impressive array of keynote speakers and breakout sessions.” Therefore, stay tuned to more information on the expected event for information on ways to volunteer and attend.

Joan Ogwumike, Staff Writer
Students & Staff comment on the Cultural Influence of Don Cornelius and Soul Train.....

“I can remember watchin Soul Train every Saturday with my brothers tryin to learn the latest dances on the infamous Soul Train line, and lookin at the cool clothes the dancers in the crowd wore. If you were on Soul Train you must have been cool, so everybody would watch and make sure their style was as fly as cats on Soul Train! Another reason why Soul Train was critical to our community, was because of its longevity. It was the only show that was just as culturally relevant to my Mother's generation as it was to mine. We shared in that bond and it helped to close the generation gap. My Mom knew what Soul Train was, and she knew that by watching with me, we were sharing in something that was hip to both of us. I think today's entertainment is really lacking the generational connectivity.” - Chris Warren, PhD Candidate in American Studies

“I knew he was an innovator and producer of the show and he was able to bring to television the greatest music and performers of our time. He was able to show what community looks like, and the power music has to bring communities together. On Saturday morning you could see Black folks and Whites folks dancing together and brown people, completely unified through music. It was like American Band Stand for Black folks.”

-Dr. Twana A. Harris, BCC Full Time Artist-in-Residence

“... my mom and I used to watch it when I was younger every Saturday it was like a ritual.” - Jasmine Reid, Sophomore, Public Health

Accolades To.... Hats off to the BLack Graduate Association for antoher sucessful Grad Student 101. This program is directed at undergraduates who m ay be considering graduate school.

Congratulations to M.F.A. candididate La Toya Hobbs for conducting a printmaking workshop qwith students from Oakland High School.

Appllause to Jsenior Jesssica Ward, who has been recognized as the Afri- can American Studies Department Outstanding Senior.
In a *Critical History of Soul Train on Television*, author Christopher Lehman examines the TV show *Soul Train*. According to Lehman, Don Cornelius was instrumental in not only the production of the show from a local to nationally syndicated television series but also established a brand which extended to awards and merchandise while simultaneously elevating concerns of the African American community. The book follows a chronological analysis beginning with the show’s Chicago, Illinois beginnings and moves forward to the show without Cornelius as host. Lehman relies heavily on newspaper and magazine accounts from the time period of the show to reveal how the series captured the imagination of Black audiences. Additionally these same sources also disclose the growing cross over audience the show garnered over time. The text also includes interviews with show regulars and guests. This is especially enlightening for understanding the significance of the local years of the show and its role in Chicago music history.

While the book highlights the cultural impact of the show and its influence on the careers of too many rhythm and blues artists to name in this space, it balances this with a discussion of the show’s challenge to remain relevant in the midst of a changing music scene heavily connected to the increasing popularity of music videos and the emergence of hip hop music and culture.

The book also includes several appendices which are a fountain of *Soul Train* trivia. For example one includes a list of guests host from 1993-97 and another is a list of all artists who have appeared on the show divided in to subheadings by the number of times they have appeared on the series. Perhaps the most informative list is the discography. I had forgotten that there was an actual *Soul Train Records* and after the label’s demise other record labels recorded *Soul Train* music compilations.

The *Soul Train* line has an iconic status throughout the black community. I can’t think of many wedding receptions, or family reunions without at least one taking place. I can’t even begin to count how many contemporary black movies also feature the *Soul Train* line. There are not many books which chronicle the history and influence of *Soul Train*. I imagine with the recent death of Don Cornelius there will be much more scholarship on the topic. I recommend this book for scholars of black popular culture and for general audiences who just enjoyed the show.

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*Recommended Reading*

*Black Cool: One Thousand Streams of Blackness* by Rebecca Walker. In this collection of essays Walker and others examine Black culture’s influence on defining “cool.”
Originally founded in 1981 on Purdue’s Campus, the previously named Women’s Resource Office began fostering and providing resources for advancement of women in leadership roles and promoting gender equity. According to Managing Director, Katie Pope, the program was restructured around three and a half years ago and then again in April of 2011, where she anticipates the program will remain. Pope jumped on board with the now renamed Women’s Resource Network (WRN) six years ago and has been an important and effective resource for Purdue’s faculty and students ever since.

Part of the restructuring of the WRN included the merging of the program with The Susan Bulkeley Butler Center for Leadership Exellence. As part of the Butler Center, the WRN continues to provide resources and support to Purdue’s community. This reorganization allows the many programs offered by the Butler Center and the WRN to continue their growth under one unit, as well as offer more advanced resources and services to Purdue’s campus. The WRN fosters the diversity of women students, staff, and faculty while pursuing the achievements and leadership of women in all aspects of life. Pope stated that the reorganization hasn’t changed the outreach and development opportunities to students and staff for the most part; the WRN combining with the Butler Center simply makes it possible to more effectively work with available resources and streamline work and progress.

Pope earned a B.A in English from Dayton University and an M.A in Philanthropic Studies from Indiana University. However, she didn’t take an interest in Women’s Studies until after receiving an M.S from Iowa State, which then led to her first job in the Women’s Center on Iowa’s campus. Pope stated that her goal is to meet the needs of women that frequently do not get met on a large scale. She described herself as a “Jane of all trades, master of none” when explaining that the WRN aims to be a umbrella of resources for the questions and needs of women on campus: be it concerning health care, child care, sexual assault counseling, and many other aspects.

The WRN puts on many events on Purdue’s campus, such as an event during March celebrating Women’s History Month. The WRN will also be showing a film titled “Miss Representation” toward the end of March; the film will explore how the media has contributed to the underrepresentation of women in positions of power and influence. Along with those events, Pope stated that throughout the year the WRN seeks out and schedules a variety of nationally-known and locally-known speakers to give seminars and lectures on leadership development for women. More information about the WRN and the Butler Center can be found at www.purdue.edu/butler.
Prince Hall and Free Masonry: A Local Celebration

Allias Jones, Staff Writer

Freemasonry can be defined as a natural fundamental bond or fellowship, such as the freemasonry of the student body, questing for knowledge. On a deeper level than that definition would be the practice of the Freemasons, the oldest fraternal organization in history.

Freemasonry as it is known today is a relevant, pre-eminent fraternity, committed to attracting, developing, and retaining men of high quality who strive for self-improvement and the opportunity to serve others. Formed by Prince Hall and a host of other African freemasons on May 6, 1787, the day of its official organization, the Prince Hall fraternity today has over 4,500 lodges worldwide, forming 46 independent jurisdictions with a membership of over 300,000 masons. This fraternity holds strong to the tenants of faith, hope, and charity in order to demonstrate the highest moral behavior built on time honored principles, rules, and guidelines, forever striving to “Make Good Men Better Men”.

Gregory-James Rufus, Assistant Video Systems Engineer at Hall of Music Productions, agreed to speak with the newsletter in relation to the Freemasons and the recent 120th anniversary of his local charter. He became a freemason while serving as the student technical director of the Black Cultural Center in the late 90’s. His full title is “Worshipful Master of Floyd Lodge No. 23 of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge Jurisdiction of Indiana”.

“This past fall Floyd Lodge No. 23 celebrated its 120 year anniversary in the city of Lafayette, Indiana,” Rufus states. “We are so proud to be of service to the community especially representing the local African-American population during a troubled era in our nation’s history.”

Floyd Lodge #23 was chartered on Sunday September 13, 1891 along with granting the charters of lodges located in Muncie (Widow’s Son Lodge #22), Brazil (St. Paul Lodge #24) and Crawfordsville (St. Mark’s Lodge #25). For 120 years strong, the Brethren of Floyd Lodge No. 23 have continued to contribute to and serve Lafayette. Today the Craft of Floyd Lodge continues to do the work of Masonry throughout the Jurisdiction of Indiana and working especially in Tippecanoe County.

When asked about the most significant factor of Floyd Lodge No. 23’s anniversary, Rufus remarked on the strength of their lodge, as well as its members and their continued push towards being better men by working diligently with their young men and educating them on what it takes to be a better husband, better father, and better citizen. “Rewarding and acknowledging the positives rather than focusing on the negatives.”

Be sure to keep your ear to the ground for the Freemasons of Lafayette. They are doing great things in the community, for us and for our future.
Whitney Houston
1963-2012

As I have spent the past few days pondering the passing of Whitey Houston I find myself thinking about what many would consider her iconic moment, her performance of the national anthem on January 27, 1991 at Superbowl XXV. Most cultural critics believe this is to be the best performance of the national anthem ever, particularly at a national sporting event. Without a doubt her rendition, of a song considered by many vocalists to be quite difficult, set a bar that most would be unable to follow. For me there is a greater context to this performance. You see it is quite the irony that American patriotism and American popular culture intersect with race in Houston’s gold standard performance of the Star Spangled Banner. This intersection reminds me of “Double Consciousness in Black America. In *The Souls of Black Folks* W.E.B. DuBois coined this term to describe the dilemma where African Americans feel trapped between their self-perception of being American and their African ancestry. Du Bois states it this way, “The Negro ever feels his two-ness- an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two reconciled strivings. . . two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.” In her performance of the national anthem Houston was able, if just for a moment, to coalesce the two souls and two thoughts captured in DuBois’ musings. However, we know that humans are complex beings and often there are simultaneous “warrings” within us. This seems to be the case with Houston. As of this writing there is much speculation about her specific cause of death. As the public seems to cycle rapidly through the passing of yet another celebrity, the mourning lives on for her family. I think it may behoove us to slow down a bit and consider those we love, the unreconciled strivings they may face (or that we face) and identify and pursue paths to healing.

*Juanita Crider, Editor*