

MERRY CHRISTMAS

HAPPY KWANZAA

Season's Greetings

HAPPY HANUKKA

HAPPY NEW YEAR

The opinions expressed in this column are the author's and do not necessarily represent the staff of the Banner.

EDITORIAL

True meaning of Christmas

During the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, when shopping and even scavenging sometimes for that perfect gift for family or friends it seems as though we get wrapped up in this Christmas-fantasy land.

We allow the media to tell us when to start our celebration and when to end it. As good Christmas soldiers we are supposed to have this yuletide spirit for a few weeks where we exchange pleasant greetings and kind words to people we don't know.

We amuse ourselves by singing flaky Christmas songs such as "Jingle Bells" and "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." Our mouths water for Christmas day to arrive so we can have our pallets satisfied with turkey, stuffing, ham and the like. After Christmas day is over we often brag about what we got or complain about what we didn't get. We then rush to the stores to get a bargain and find out what's the latest on sale.

Have we forgotten what Christmas day truly means or are we that wrapped up in ourselves?

It's not all about receiving gifts, eating great food and shopping to our heart's content. Dec. 25, was set aside to give honor and worship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a time we fellowship and give testimonies for the things that He has done in our lives; this is the time for remembering. We also must not be selfish in our actions but giving instead. If you really want to please God here are a few words of wisdom: volunteer at a food shelter; drop a dollar in a person's cup on the street; forget a grudge; do good to somebody who has wronged you; write a letter to your parents saying how much you love and appreciate them; give money to a charity anonymously; donate a toy; and lastly tie your New Year's resolution around the Lord so you just don't do these charitable things around Christmas but all year through.

I'm not saying that Christmas traditions are wrong but we as people need to prioritize what is more important. Who comes first? Do you know?

**GOOD LUCK
ON
YOUR FINALS!!**

BENNETT BANNER

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Kwanzaa defined

Stephanie McCorkle
Banner Reporter

Kwanzaa. What do you know about it? You may have heard about it in passing or seen advertisements.

The name, which means "first fruits" is a celebration of culture and community involvement. And it was started in 1965, an "alternative" holiday celebrated by African-Americans for seven days beginning Dec. 26.

Ada Hamilton, a senior, attended a Kwanzaa awareness program that was hosted by Player Hall and sponsored by Student Services.

Hamilton had no knowledge of the African American custom, but was open to learning about it.

"To me, it was different because I did not know the facts of what it was all about. I did not have all of the details and it was not anything that I had experienced before. I did not know the meaning of the different days," Hamilton said.

Each day of the Kwanzaa celebration has a symbolic meaning

The first day, Umoja, means unity.

The second day, Kujichagulia, means self determination.

The third day, Ujima, means collective work and responsibility.

The fourth day, Ujamaa, means coop-

erative economics.

The fifth day, Nia, means purpose.

The sixth day, Kuumba, means creativity and self reliance.

The seventh day and final day, Imani, means faith.

Along with the seven days of Kwanzaa are basic symbols of the celebration: mazao "crops," representing the reward of productive labor; the mkeka, "mat," symbolizing the African foundation, the kinara, "candle holder," representing African parenthood; the vibunzi, "ears of corn," symbolizing children and reproduction; zawadi representing "gifts," given for achievement; kikombe cha umoja meaning the "unity cup," symbolizes unity among the family; and mishumaa saba, the "seven candles," represent the unity of the African-American people.

Unlike Christmas, Kwanzaa is not a commercialized celebration.

"Those who celebrate Kwanzaa exchange handmade gifts and gifts that educate the children about their African-American heritage," Hamilton said.

Hamilton added that although she never got caught up in gift buying at Christmas she prefers that holiday to Kwanzaa.

"Kwanzaa would be a nice addition to traditional Christmas celebration but I would never give up Christmas for Kwanzaa," Hamilton said.

The Bennett Banner

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