

X-Men

from Page 13

as a goddess in her native Africa for her ability to control the weather; Thunderbird, a Native American gifted with speed, strength, and a quick temper; Nightcrawler, the German-born teleporter with amazing physical prowess; Colossus, a man of living steel hailing from the Soviet Union, and Banshee, the Irish master of sound. Together, these men and women succeeded in rescuing the original X-Men and established the core cast for the X-Men. In a time when most superhero teams were either all Caucasian or had only one token minority member, the X-Men had a culturally diverse group of men and women from around the world. The obvious point was that a good character will be popular, no matter the skin tone, and having a culturally-mixed base of heroes lends greater depth to the storyline and to the characters by providing different backgrounds from which the writers can draw. A culturally-mixed group also means a better representation of the population, which makes the team more realistic and more believable.

The second aspect of the X-Men which lends depth and realism to their story is the fact that the plight of the X-Men can be associated with most any persecuted group. The X-Men are part of a small segment of humans termed "homo sapiens superior," or mutants, men and women naturally born with extraordinary abilities. In the Marvel Comics Universe (Marvel being the company who publishes all the X-titles) mutants are feared and hated by "normal," humans. They are subject to discrimination and public ridicule. Whether by design or accident, the writers of X-Men have structured the stories to include a number of allegorical relationships between the leaders of certain mutant groups and the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. It is not difficult to see that Charles Xavier's dream of peaceful coexistence parallels Reverend Martin Luther King's dream of racial equality. Following his lead, while the X-Men have become more action-oriented as of late, they still follow a doctrine of teaching their lesson equality, as Beast states in issue #25 of X-Men, "through the open hand rather than through the closed fist."

Of course, the more militant facets of the Civil Rights Movement are also represented in the X-Men's universe. While at one point Magneto himself was deemed a representative of Malcolm X's philosophies, a popular character has taken over that familiar role. His name is Cable, his history is muddled through endless time traveling, and his philosophy takes more initiative than Xavier's. Cable and his group, X-Force, were originally founded to identify and attack hostile mutant groups and prejudice human groups, instead of waiting around to be attacked. Cable is portrayed not only as a passionate, charismatic leader but also as a cold, lethal warrior dedi-

cated to winning equality for all and preventing evil mutants from coming to power. As for the aforementioned Magneto, this man's true name is Eric Lehnsherr, and he is a survivor of the holocaust. The atrocities he witnessed while interned at the prison camps convinced him that only through mutant domination could mutants ever be safe from human persecution. Becoming more and more powerful as the years progressed, Magneto clearly became the representative of the most extreme militant groups, those men and women who believe that only by force will the oppressor acknowledge those who are oppressed. The irony behind Magneto is, while he is often portrayed as one of the X-Men's greatest villains, he genuinely believes that he is doing the right thing to help his people, effectively illustrating that the right and wrong in any struggle depends on who writes the history books.

One bold innovation Marvel may have inadvertently taken is their introduction of "The Legacy Virus," a virus engineered by a villain named Stryfe. The virus originally confined itself to the mutant population but has since mutated into a strain capable of infecting humans. While it is more believable that Marvel introduced the concept of the Legacy Virus as a way to conveniently put old and unpopular mutants on the shelf, it is possible to view it's introduction as a counterpart to the AIDS virus. Originally, AIDS was viewed as a purely homosexual disease, but soon after its' discovery, evidence of the virus began showing up in the heterosexual population. The Legacy Virus is an ongoing plot line in the X-titles, and it will be interesting to see in what way, or even if, it will be resolved.

As is often the case, the most interesting and entertaining stories tend to have some kind of basis in real life, a foundation that stirs a chord in all of us, whether we recognize it or not. While the X-Men have been commercialized as of late, they had humble beginnings and a noble purpose, and we should not forget that these qualities undoubtedly make the X-Men "heroes."

Teach Me

from page 14

taught--not humiliated, taught--not intimidated. Professors who cannot teach in such a manner as to foster the enlightenment and intellectual enhancement of the students at Fayetteville State University should either refrain from teaching or rethink their methods of teaching. For those professors who insist that the student is "trying to get the degree that they already have," you are right. Not only do we want the "degree," but also we want--we demand--the considerable knowledge and wisdom that should accompany a credible, prestigious degree. Give us the education that we want and that we must have to survive in this society.

Resurrection

from page 11

necked and rebellious people. With all of this hell we're in, we should be ready to atone for our foolishness.

Black Woman, you have carried the nation on your back. When the Black Man denied all of his responsibilities, it was that mother or that sister who bared the burden. This is why only the Black man was called to Washington D.C.; for his ignorance in refusing what God has ordained him to do. October 16 was a day for the Black man to rise from his doormat state and bear witness before God and the entire world that he was lost but now he's found; was blind but now he sees. Let's rise, people, and make a new reality.

To all my brothers, may Allah (God) bless you with peace on your individual journeys from to D.C. Everybody get ready to shock the world! It is time for the Negro to die and the God to rise!

Did you know?

by Vadrin Colvin

Englishman John Cadbury, the chocolate extraordinaire (you know the Cadbury bunny commercials?), made his wealth from the cocoa boards in West Africa as a result of the destruction caused by the slave trade.

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Everytime you drink old English malt liquor you condone and participate in the atrocities caused by the slave trade. According to Alfred "Coach," Powell, a violence prevention specialist and researcher, the number 800 on a bottle of Old English represents the year 1800, the year the English dominated the slave trade. The amount paid for one healthy black male was 33 crowns, the exact amount of crowns counted on the bottle's label.

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Keeping with the same motif, Mr. Powell has also analyzed the Budweiser commercial consisting of ants in the desert. According to Mr. Powell the ants symbolize Black Africans dancing in a tribal nature. If you notice, congo drums can be heard in the background. The ants carry the bottle as if it were their king. Incidentally, Budweiser is known as the "King of Beers." As the bottle is turned upside-down into the ant-hole, Mr. Powell describes this act as a rape of Mother Africa. The Budweiser bottle, thus, symbolizes the penis pouring alcohol into the Queen Mother, killing the African children that she bears.

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Selma Burke, a black woman from Mooresville, N.C., sculpted the bust of former President Franklin Delano Roosevelt that is seen on the dime.

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A black woman, Ms. Ann Fudge, is the President of Maxwell House coffee.

The name Candace means "Queen of Cush," Cush, also spelled Kush, is the

name of a region in East Africa that existed as one of the earliest Great civilization in the East.

Source: *African America: Portrait of a People, 1994*

Essence, August 1995

African-American Encyclopedia v.2

"The Final Call" Aug. 30, 1995 p.6

Steppers

from page 6

They began their stepping off with symbolism. Racism was symbolized by someone dressed in a Ku Klux Klan outfit, injustice was symbolized by a person in chains (a slave), and exploitation was symbolized by someone dressed in an Aunt Jemima outfit. This was truly an original and outstanding idea. The only thing that may have given the sisters problems was all that posing; although as significant as it may have been, it took up too much time and may have been interpreted wrong.

The men came next. The sophisticated men of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. were first. They came out with eye catching tuxedos on. The only touch missing was the jackets, but they didn't need them to set off their stepping. It spoke for itself. It was precise and very good.

The next brothers to come out were the fine brothers of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. They set the scene with a doctor and an assistant that looked like Egor. Then a bang went off and a cloud of white smoke filled the stage. Then the brothers came out in their sharp outfits. Their steps were calculated and, as could be observed, very practiced.

Stepping next were the brothers of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. I have to say that I give credit to all those who stepped in the first place, but to step with precision with a cane has to be difficult. Some brothers missed steps and messed up, but no one is absolutely perfect. One person stepped so hard his cane broke, but he continued to step despite the fact.

Last, but not least, were the brothers of Groove Phi Groove Social Fellowship. Even though they are not Greek oriented, to see them step was interesting. Their steps, although good, were repetitive. They should have broken it up and incorporated different moves into their routine. Once again the crowd was rude and the brothers were disrespected totally.

Finally, the winners were to be announced. The trophies were presented to the ladies of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the brothers of Phi Beta Sigma, Inc. Congratulations go to these steppers who deserved their awards for their stepping, as well as their originality. Even though there could only be two winner's I believe everyone deserved an award for their time, effort, and courage. They should all be given a hand.