

Kwanza

An Alternative Holiday Celebration

By Jeri Harvey
Post Staff Writer

December 26 will find much of the nation coping with the wreckage of wrapping paper, tinsel and broken toys that is an aftermath of Christmas day. For some black households, however, it is the first day of an alternative holiday celebration - Kwanza.

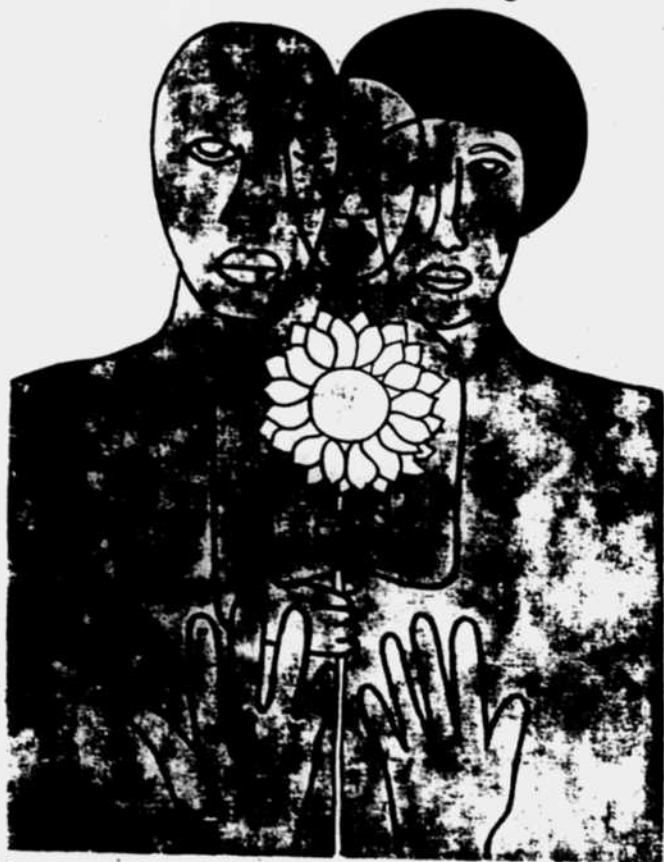
Meaning "first fruit," Kwanza began in Africa centuries ago. When the advent of the civil rights movement of the sixties brought with it a renewed search for cultural identity among American blacks, which continues til now, some of them began to substitute Kwanza for the traditional Christmas-New Year celebration of the western world.

The seven days of Kwanza last from December 26 through January 1, which is the time of harvest in Africa - thus the name "first fruit." Each day of the celebration is dedicated to a basic value such as unity, creativity and faith. The entire week consists of feasting, dancing and religious expression by the participants and is heavy with symbolism.

At such a celebration in New York about 5 years ago, a local man, Harold Parks, looked at some of the principals Kwanza embodied and decided to make it "his holiday." Since then he has sent Kwanza greetings to friends at holiday time but often found it difficult to obtain the cards in Charlotte.

"I nurtured the idea of producing my own for a while," Parks said, "and T.J. (Reddy) and I kicked the idea around between us off and on. But it was our 'sudden unemployment' last June that provided the necessary shove to get us started."

Parks was director of a program at Central Piedmont designed to aid first offenders to find jobs and schooling as an alternative to prison, and T.J. Reddy was employed with him as a counselor. The program was not re-funded after it's first year of opera-



UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN
...Traditional Card

The two formed a company named Freedoms Insight Limited and had the first cards ready for distribution in October.

The line consists of Kwanza cards, with their message of "creative growth and productivity"; wedding and birth announcements, invitations, birthday cards for mothers and Thanksgiving cards. Some are suitable for use by those observing the traditional Christmas holiday.

Each of the 16 different designs are "developed from an African perspective" and use illustrations based on African motifs. An effort is made to "underscore the distinctly African principles of familyhood, collective work, creativity, harmonious movement and struggle for the common good," according to a brochure explaining the philosophy behind the cards.

Much of the graphics (art work) is done by Reddy, an accomplished artist and author, and Katie Henderson, a local woman, is responsible for some. The two partners collaborate on verses. Reddy concentrates mainly on production; while Parks works on distribution, which has proven somewhat difficult.

Explaining the difficulty, Parks said, "I quickly discovered you don't walk in and show the cards and see them placed on the shelves, just like that. No, no. First you have to get an appointment with the buyer, who's always off in Atlanta or California or somewhere, and then when you finally see him he tells you he likes your product but he ordered for the current season six months ago. So we decided to go to smaller outlets within

the community and to hit as many department stores as possible."

The Intimate Book Store at Eastland, Ivey's, Belk's, Hi-Fi Camera Center, Plaza Apothecary, Bitsy Bounty, L&D Beverages and Disco Records, Ltd. have the cards for sale locally and Parks has made trips to several large cities to open accounts.

Plans for the future include a new line due out in January which will include sympathy, get well, love and family birthday cards.

The partners also hope to get into distribution on a large scale. As Parks explained it, "There are a lot of beautiful cards being produced by individual artists which reflect the feelings and ideals of the black consumer but, for various reasons, distribution is poor. We hope to perfect a system which will correct this situation since distribution is The Key To Success."

Cards and brochures may be ordered from: Freedoms Insight Limited, P.O. Box 1294, Charlotte, N.C. 28231. The cost is \$3.99 per dozen plus 10 percent handling charge.

Women Voters

To Meet With

Ken Harris

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg League of Women Voters will meet with Mayor Ken Harris and members of the City Council to discuss League issues at a noon luncheon Thursday, December 15.

President Karen Gaddy and Barbara Mattingly, chairman of the local energy conservation study, will highlight League activities and major concerns related to city government.

The luncheon, open to the public, will be held at the Trade Street YWCA, 418 East Trade.

New Holiday Makeup For Black Women

According to the beauty editors at GLAMOUR Magazine, now is the perfect time to dip into the wonderful new deep makeup colors you've been seeing in the stores all fall. Here are some ideas on how to use them for a great holiday face.

For cheeks, try the wine or ruby reds. You'll get the best look if you apply color high on the cheekbone, starting on the bone under the pupil of your

eye. (If you can't feel the cheekbone, you're applying the color too low.) Blend out to the hairline and up just a bit.

For eyes, try some of the

glittery metallic shades around now. Gold, copper and bronze are all great on black skin. There are also colored metallics like deep blue, khaki and pink. Stay away from silvery colors as they can look too white and artificial. Any shadow that has some brown in it will look especially pretty -- for example, browned pink, peach or khaki. Try applying a single color so that is has the most intensity in the crease of the upper lid and the least just under the browbone. You can also use two different colors; two shades of the same color is a good idea. You could even rim the eye with a metallic

pencil. You'll get a very pretty look if you bring the color under the lower lashes. Keep it very close to your lashline and don't extend it beyond the center of the eye; keep it on the outer corner only.

For lips, try a deep rich burgundy, a browned red or a wine. Use a gloss over it to enhance fullness or use a colored gloss. If you want to make you lips appear less full, try using a lip pencil to outline the lips just inside the natural lipline. Fill in with pretty

color. If you have uneven pigmentation in your lips -- a common problem for black women -- try applying a bit of makeup foundation or brown lipstick to help even out the color. Then apply lipcolor as usual.

+++Special Effects
You'll find lots of lovely loose finishing powders in the stores now in colors like bronze, copper or gold. Apply them subtly to cheekbones, across the forehead or all over to dazzle.

Black Cats Have A Ball

The Black Cat Club, one of the oldest social clubs in Charlotte, opened the Christmas season with a cocktail dance at the Excelsior Club recently.

Members and their families and friends enjoyed refreshments prepared by Jimmy McKee and later danced to the organ music of Lew Currie.

Among those present were the widows of two former Black Cat members, Mrs.

Johnny (Thelma) Dwiggins and Mrs. John H. (Cecelia) Wilson.

Black Cat members are Galveston Haygood, president; Ray Perry, vice-president; Carl J. Hunt, secretary; Alexander Davis, assistant secretary; Harry Mills, treasurer; C. Arthur Anderson, Harry Henderson, G.T. Nash, Jr., Elvert C. Garvin and Crosby Byrd.

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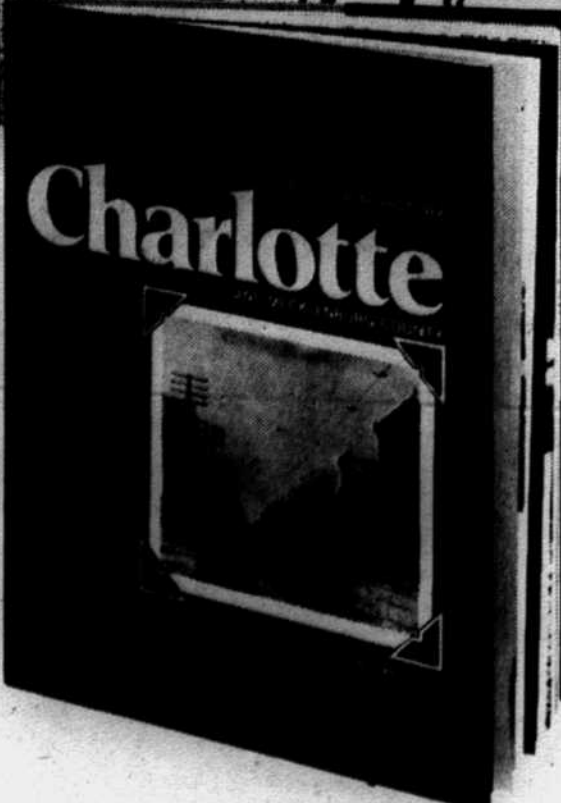
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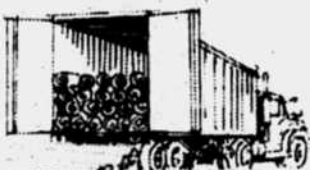


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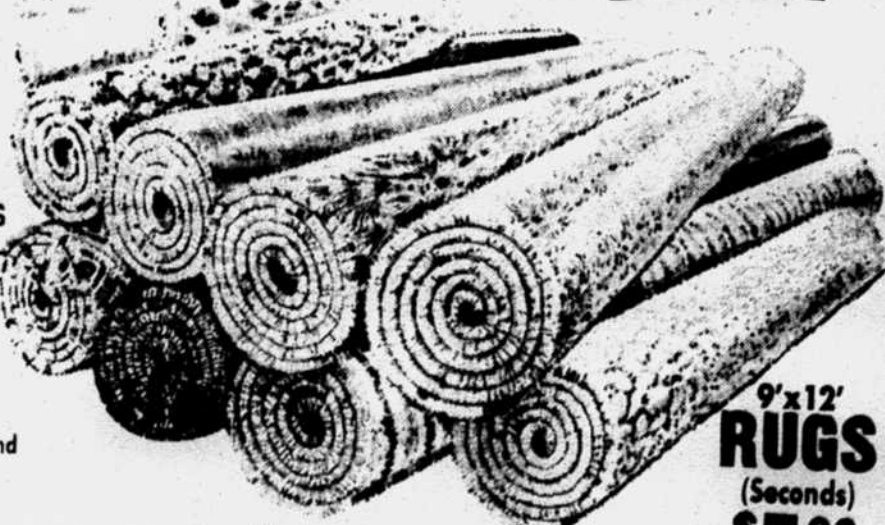
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