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OPINION

TV version of 'Boondocks' stirs controversy over 'N' word

By E.R. Shipp
KRT WIRE SERVICE

I will never embrace the N-word.

That's why I have difficulty with the TV version of "The Boondocks" that just premiered on the Cartoon Network. As adapted from the in-your-face comic strip created by Aaron McGruder, the show uses the N-word quite vigorously.

Maybe this is a generational thing. I'm old school. But, heck, old school means that I not only know how to speak correct English but that I also know a bit about history. I have lived through times when white slingers of the N-word meant no endearment.

I embrace another N-word for endearment and disparagement. It's "Negro." That was always a word that was

a step up from the one that McGruder finds so comfortably trickling off his tongue.

When I use the word Negro, you know where you stand with me by inflection and where my hands are on my hips.

I have often defended McGruder's comic strip, even when newspapers that carry it refuse to publish it because of its incendiary (they say) content — whether about Black Entertainment Television's lack of blackness or Whitney Houston's drug problems or the Bush administration post-9/11 or Condoleezza Rice's love life. The strip offers three facets of the angry black man, with two preteen boys, Huey and Riley, living with their grandfather in a most-

ly white suburb that is nothing like their former neighborhood in Chicago.

I'll keep an open mind about the television version. David Bianculli, the TV critic for the New York Daily News, is among those who liked its late-night debut. The show, as he sees it, "with all its knowingly controversial observations and language, is a sort of animated equivalent of 'All in the

Family.' It'll make you think, and maybe even wince — but at the same

time, it makes you smile." Unless you're wincing so much about that N-word. "I think it makes the show sincere," said McGruder in a recent online interview with Lee Bailey. "At a certain point, we all have to realize that sometimes we use bad language. And the N-word is used so commonly, by not

only myself, but by a lot of people I know, that it feels fake to write around it and to avoid using it."

Back in the day, that is to say, when I was a college student in Georgia, I thought it rather cool to hear the radical group, The Last Poets, precursors to today's rappers, use music and the spoken word — even the N-word — to analyze, even sear, American society and values, and to pump up blacks with a sense of we-were-once-royalty-in-Africa. But I have evolved and have flushed that word from my historically sensitive brain.

McGruder claims that he has merely picked up the conversation begun in the days when the comedian and social critic Flip Wilson, in his own words, reserved the right to be a n——. "This

is a country that celebrates Richard Pryor as a genius," McGruder told The Associated Press, "and still we wonder if we should be using the word 'nigga' in entertainment. It's a conversation that hasn't gone anywhere in about 30 years."

Wilson is dead. Pryor is incapacitated, but when he was still vigorous and razor sharp, he renounced the use of the N-word after a life-changing pilgrimage to Africa.

Good luck with your TV show, Aaron. But if you remain true to your pledge to bombard us with the N-word, I don't think there is enough Botox in the world to keep me watching and wincing and still keeping it together. I'll tune out.

Call it my generational privilege.

From the Editor: For many, Christmas is not about the presents, tinsel and a jolly old elf

WSSU should join the battle against obesity

By Lisa R. Boone
ARGUS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Fried chicken, baked spaghetti and pizza are foods often seen on the daily posted WSSU dining hall menu.

During breakfast, lunch or dinner the majority of the food served in the WSSU dining hall—the cafe—is what some call a nutritious meal.

But is it?

The American Obesity Association reports that a larger percentage of blacks and Hispanics are overweight and, as a result, are more prone to suffer from diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes.

Obesity in African-American college students, especially those who attend historically black colleges and universities, is climbing at an alarming rate. Recently, some HBCU officials have decided to create weight-loss initiatives to combat obesity in students and faculty.

Among such universities is Norfolk State University. NSU offers vegetable-packed menus, walking trails and weight-loss contests to encourage healthy eating and exercising. Alcorn State University, Lincoln University, South Carolina State University, Talladega College and

Wiley College also started similar programs to encourage healthy and active lifestyles for students and faculty.

The National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO) distributes grants to support these programs and plans to send data collected on student weight to the minority health office of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The long lines in the cafe lead to steaming platters of different kinds of food. And yes, it is up to the student to decide which foods to eat. But what should a student who wants to eat a healthy and delicious meal do when the selection is so limited?

Suggestion cards are posted at the exit of the cafe. Let WSSU officials know what's on your mind. What's more, ask officials if WSSU can start similar programs such as the ones other HBCUs have begun. Our health is important.

The Associated Press contributed to this column.

By Dreama Williams
ARGUS REPORTER

What is the first thing to pop into your mind when you hear the word Christmas?

Do you think of Santa Claus, Frosty the Snowman, reindeer, gifts, snow, stockings or a Christmas tree? If you're like most people, all of the above items will remind you that Christmas is near. But what is Christmas all about? In my

opinion, Christmas is about the birth of Jesus Christ. But for many people it is about buying gifts for a long list of friends and family members.

Holiday decorations often depict Santa rather than the baby Jesus. Something is really wrong with this picture. It seems as though Christmas has become a commercial holiday centered on a jolly old man bringing gifts to children. In fact, in the eyes of many children, there is no Christmas without

Santa and gifts.

In my view, however, Christmas is about family and love, thankfulness, and most of all, at least for those of us who are Christians, the birth of our savior, Jesus Christ. There's nothing wrong with shopping and the exchange of gifts, but let us not forget the true reason for the season: There would be no Christmas without the birth of Christ.

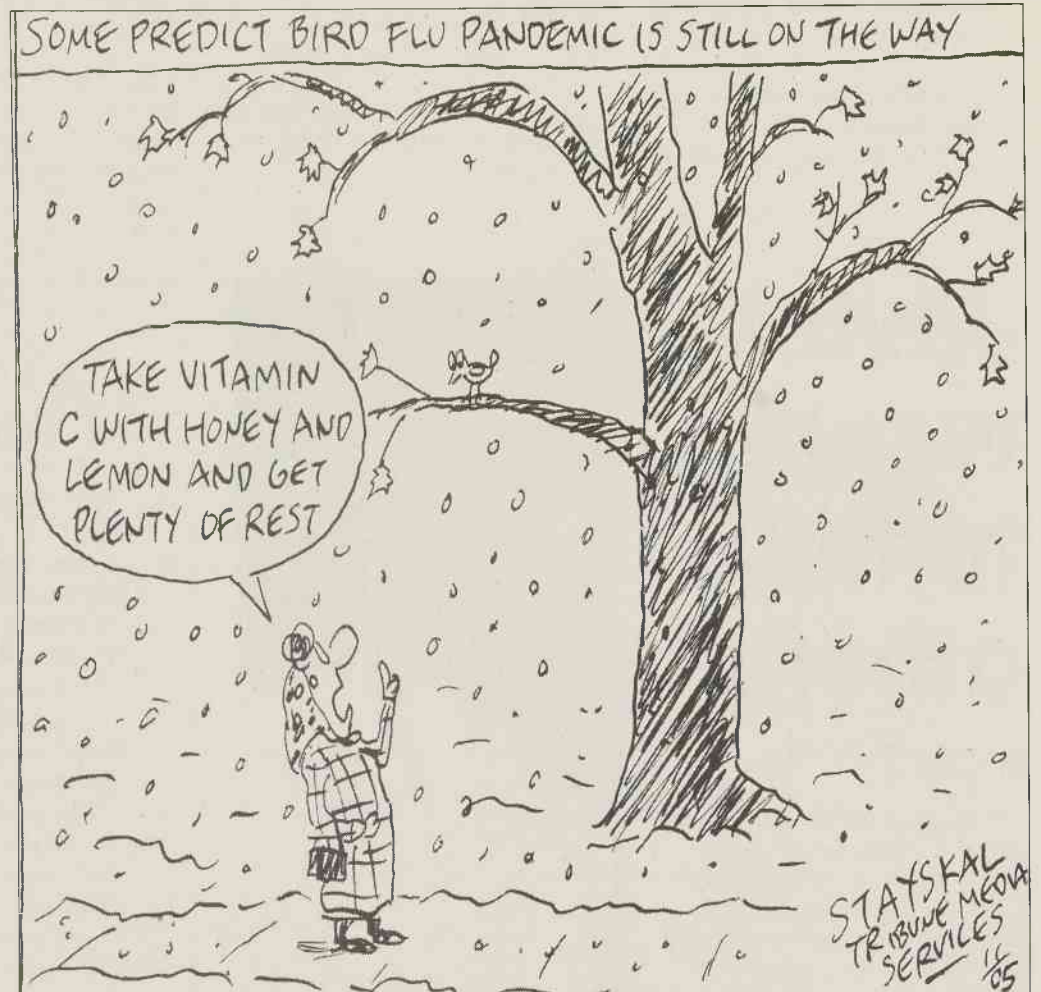


Boone

What's on your mind?

The News Argus welcomes letters to the editor.

Please send letters to newzargus@yahoo.com, with the subject line "Letter to the Editor." Include your full name, including middle initial, classification at the university (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior or senior), and the name of your home city and state. All letters are subject to cutting and editing and should be limited to 200 words.



WSSU students take advantage of learning experiences

As WSSU continues to provide a broad-range of experiences for our students, you must continue your commitment to take advantage of those opportunities.

Equally so, you must seek out opportunities based on your academic, career, and communities interests; opportunities that provide venues for further development and networking with your peers and future colleagues in your fields of human endeavor.

One such example of exploring opportunities is the recent Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund Leadership Institute

chancellor's
corner

with Dr. Harold L. Martin



Conference in New York City. Ten students, including several graduate students, attended the conference on behalf of WSSU. As a requirement, the students were all business majors and they spent the fall semester training in leadership enhancement courses before attending the Institute. The

courses were a part of the Strengths Quest training program developed by a division of the Gallop Organization. This division focuses on innovative approaches to leadership based on positive psychology. Our students were among 500 student leaders from around the country who continued their training during the weekend as well as attending a career fair and the annual awards dinner. These students truly made the most of the Institute.

WSSU students attended another conference recently. This was

the National Black MBA Association held in San Diego, CA. Twelve student members of the WSSU MBA Club were selected to attend as a result of their involvement last year. As well, two students from the Mass Communications Department attended the conference and documented the conference as members of the press along with other reporters. There were over 8,000 attendees at the conference, most of whom were corporate professionals and graduate students. The conference featured special lectures and seminars along with

a career fair with over 300 Fortune 500 companies. This was a tremendous opportunity for our students.

In realizing the many exceptional opportunities for development and career enhancement, you must embrace an unfettered commitment to explore these experiences. As well, your sense of commitment to explore these opportunities should be coupled with a desire to share your insight; insight that can benefit your fellow WSSU students.

Thank you for embracing excellence.