

Ebony Readers bring trauma of South African injustice to life

By ERIK ROGERS
Staff Writer

Sudden fear struck the grandmother when she saw the soldiers open fire near her house. The soldiers appeared to be firing their guns at anything they saw move. A bullet shattered a window in the house, and the grandmother picked up her grandchild to run over to the neighbor's house.

As she was running she stopped to look down at the grandchild she was carrying. The grandmother's hands were soaked in blood, and the bundle in her arms that used to be breathing was now lifeless.

It is true stories like this that prompted a group of 34 dedicated students to raise public awareness of racial oppression in South Africa.

"Mandela, The Land and The People," which The Ebony Readers presented in conjunction with the Black Cultural Center Wednesday night, showed an intense side of Nelson Mandela and South Africa.

The crowd that filled Hanes Art Center came to witness a telling of South African events. And that is exactly what the audience got. The chatter and laughter of the people came to a halt as the lights dimmed. Then the two aisles filled with students clad in colorful costumes. As they walked toward the bottom of the auditorium, their rhythmic walking joined their harmonious voices as they sang "Bring Back Mandela."

"It was not a hard choice about what the group would do this year."

— director
Soyini Madison

Meanwhile, there was just as much activity going on on stage, as young girls waved beautifully colored blankets. And after the performers were in place, they enlightened the audience about Mandela and his homeland. Many of the stories cited were so heartbreaking that it brought tears to the eyes of some audience members.

In one instance, a black man and his wife were taking a stroll when they came across two black girls sitting on the ground eating fish and chips. At that moment, the couple saw two white boys run up to the girls and kick the food out of the girls' hands. The boys then ran away, laughing about what they had accomplished.

Although they turned around to see the two pathetic girls, they did not see the tears of one girl and the bloody hand (from the kick) of the other.

Acts of violence are nothing new in South Africa, according to Soyini Madison, director of the play and an instructor of speech communication. Madison said there was a twofold purpose in presenting the play.

"My goal was to entertain the people,

but at the same time I wanted to educate them as well. The performance must be political and beautiful at the same time. And until this planet is free of racial oppression, and until we have accomplished establishing world peace, then I will continue to make it my aim to work toward that end."

Madison said the play centered around a selection of poetry, speeches and letters written by Nelson Mandela, his wife, Winnie, and their daughter.

"It was not a hard choice about what the group would do this year because of the fact that Mandela was freed on February 11, and it was about the time when we needed to have a definite idea about what we were going to do. So I decided to go with a story that focused on Mandela and South Africa."

Madison said the students who took part in the play should be commended for their efforts because the task of learning the material was not an easy one.

"There were certain words that are only indigenous to South Africa, and the students had to adapt to using those words. So it was a learning experience for them."

Performer Cheryl Grant, president of The Ebony Readers, said, "There were times when we would practice into the early hours of the morning."

Grant, a junior speech communication and psychology major from Fayetteville, said it was challenging to become acquainted with the material



The Ebony Readers perform 'Mandela, The Land and The People' in Hanes Art Center Wednesday night

DTHP/J. Disclafani

because it covered a global scale. Challenging or not, the material did not stop the students from acting before a congested crowd, which showed its approval with a standing ovation. But Madison said she did not want to give

anyone the wrong impression as to why the event was held.

"The program is not a way of blacks lashing out at whites, due to racial oppression. I want it to be known that I am against any kind of racism, and I

don't care what race is doing the oppressing.

"I hope people leave this program, and think about what they have seen. If they do, then we have accomplished something."

Special Easter traditions, symbols different for everyone

By BETH TATUM
Staff Writer

Easter brings to mind different images for different people. Bunny rabbits, Easter egg hunts, new church dresses, an empty tomb — all relate to this holiday.

Traditionally, Easter is the Christian holiday marking the crucifixion of

Christ and the celebration of his resurrection, which Christians believe occurred three days later. The word "easter" comes from the Germanic root meaning dawn, east, or rising sun.

Several area churches have planned special services throughout the week that coincide with the last events of Christ's life.

Maundy Thursday stands for the Last Supper, when Jesus ate with the disciples for the last time and told them of his upcoming death. Churches hold Communion, symbolic of the Last Supper, in which the body and blood of Christ are shared.

For Christians, Good Friday celebrates the day Jesus was crucified. To remember his death, University Baptist Church will hold 12:10 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. meditation services. University United Methodist Church will reflect on the day with a musical representation of the seven last words of Christ.

The somber tone set on Friday lifts with the dawn of Sunday — Easter morning. Sunrise services begin the day for Chapel Hill Bible Church and University United Methodist.

"Easter is the crux of the truth of Christianity," said Rev. Andy Homeyer, pastor of the Church of the Good Shepherd. "What makes Easter mean so much is that not only did Christ rise, but there is hope for every Christian too. They have the promise of rising from the dead into eternal fellowship with Christ."

For many, Easter is a day bound in

family tradition.

"On Easter my family goes to church; it's one of the few times I go out of the year," said Kim Connolly, a sophomore business major from Durham.

"After church, we go out to dinner and then go see my great-grandmother who is almost 95 and lives in Hurdle Mills outside of Roxboro. It's a tradition," she said.

Renee Patterson, a sophomore math major from Fuquay-Varina, has similar traditions.

"We go to church for Easter. Normally, we go to my grandmother's for dinner; it's one of three family dinners per year where everyone gets together," she said.

For others, Easter isn't shrouded in religious rituals and remains a weekend similar to any other.

"We don't celebrate Easter in Cyprus so I don't know anything about it. But I am going on a picnic with the Association of International Students that weekend. It's something special for us so we will not feel so lonely because we can't go home," said Betul Akdil, a senior business major from Cyprus.

UNC researchers use video process to find cancerous cell growth

By NOAH BARTOLUCCI
Staff Writer

Researchers in the School of Medicine have new clues toward halting the spread of cancer, minimizing the damage of heart attack and improving the odds in organ transplant.

Brian Herman and Ken Jacobson, professors of cell biology and anatomy, are pioneering the integration of microscopes, computers and video cameras to better understand the biochemical changes in living cells. The technique is called video microscopy.

By attaching video cameras to light microscopes and then linking them to computers, researchers can track the functions of living cells over time.

Herman explained that electron microscopes had been state of the art, allowing scientists to further magnify and study cell details. But while they were once revolutionary, they only allow for the study of non-living tissue — a single frame in time.

"That makes it hard to follow changes, but now we can study what sequences are involved at the cellular level," Herman said.

One application under study is the examination of cells to detect cancer at its early stages. Herman and Jacobson, along with Research Associate Stephen Lockett, believe their research may improve the Pap smear — today's standard for detecting cervical cancer.

"Out of 60,000 women who develop cervical cancer each year, 7,000 will die," Herman said. "The Pap smear is an inexpensive and very good test, but the problem is the high volume of tests done. An individual cytotechnologist may be responsible for looking at up to 35,000 slides per year."

"In some cases, they operate on a piecemeal basis, so the more slides they look at the more money they make — that is an incentive to look at as many slides as possible, and not be more careful."

Jacobson added that because of the high volume of tests done, human error resulted.

"The benefit (of video microscopy) is that you don't have the fatigue factor entering in — the computer

doesn't get tired," he said. But the computer not only would be more effective, it also would lead the results faster. The problem is training the computer, Jacobson said.

"It has to get the images and then it looks for characteristics of the disease." In another attempt to understand the spread of cancer, Jacobson uses the video microscope to study how cells move. "I'm studying how different parts of the cell work together to produce movement of the cell as a whole," he said.

Jacobson explained that this research was linked to cancer through the abnormal movement of cells. Cancer is simply unregulated cell growth. While scientists have experimented with video microscopy for the past 10 years, only in the past five have the medical applications become so apparent, Herman said.

Other video microscopy research at UNC has helped link the hardening of arteries to a change in the level of calcium in cells. A change in the level of calcium, detected with fluorescent stains, excites the growth of certain cells in the walls of coronary arteries. "We've shown that if we inhibit the changes in calcium, we inhibit the growth of these cells," Herman said.

The research also has demonstrated how cells deprived of oxygen become more acidic. According to Herman, this is a biochemical defense mechanism used by the cells. By resupplying the cells with oxygen when they are more acidic, organ transplants and heart attack therapies may be improved.

"We're very interested in what happens to cells (deprived of oxygen)," Herman said. "If we knew what the process was, we might be able to modify those processes and increase the survival of these cells."

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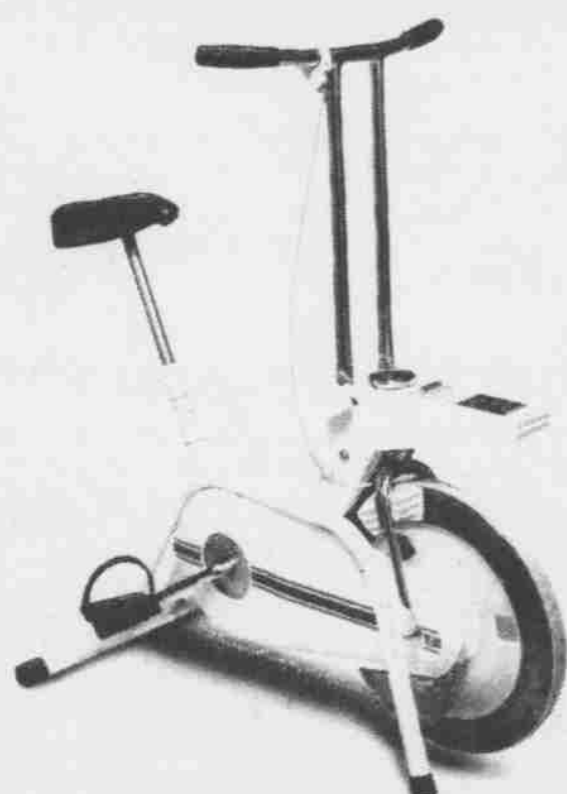
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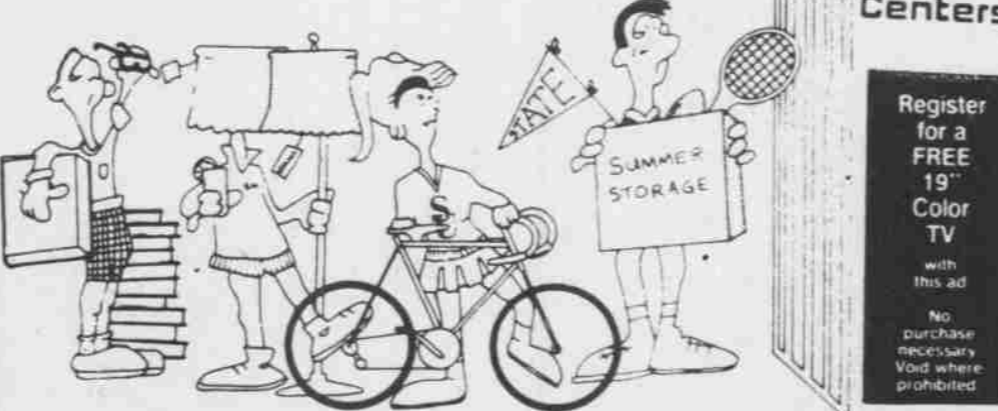
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