

February is Black History Month

A time of reflection and a move toward change

In November of 1968, Life Magazine published an extensive article titled: "In Search of A Black Past." Earlier that year, CBS aired a program narrated by Bill Cosby called: "Black History: Lost, Stolen or Strayed." Those two events marked the first time that the subject of Black American History had been presented by media on a national level.

Those productions sent ripples through American society. As a nation, we had relied on our educational institutions to bring us knowledge of our history. Regrettably, a good portion of that history had been omitted. Very little was written or taught about the black experience in this country. In those rare instances when such did indeed occur it was invariably at the small black colleges of the south. The nation, at large, was deprived of that information. That deprivation adversely affected not only

the manner in which black Americans were perceived by others but also how the preponderance of black Americans saw themselves.

Perhaps the only source of information about black people, which was readily available to a large segment of Americans, were those articles and photographs found in the National Geographic Magazine. It is apparent that even in reference to black Africans or dark-skinned Pacific Islanders and others, the photographers and writers were primarily interested in showing "T & A" with at least as much abandon as Penthouse or Playboy magazines. While those efforts had nothing to do with black Americans, the fact that in the minds of some who maintained a stereotypical view of black Americans simply because of their blackness.

Textbooks used in the schools

of the United States have, until this generation been almost devoid of any significant references to Black Americans. Those limited references have had to do with the "peculiar institution," Booker T. Washington, Louie "Satchmo" Armstrong and maybe Jackie Robinson. Blacks, as a whole, were embarrassed and were kept in the "closet." Because the task of providing Americans with an accurate multi-racial history was not being done where it should have been—in the schools of America—it became necessary to do it elsewhere. That elsewhere was the introduction of Black History Week and its evolution into Black History Month.

This is a reprint of an article by Roosevelt Fitzgerald, UNLV Professor of Anthropology/Ethnic Studies Department

ON THIS DATE IN FEBRUARY IN BLACK AMERICAN HISTORY

February 7: Monte Irvin, star of the New York Giants and the former Negro National League's Newark Eagles was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1973.

February 7: This day marks the beginning of an annual week-long observance of the contributions of Black Americans. The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History was founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson.

February 8: On this date, in 1866, Frederick Douglas challenges President Andrew Johnson on his opposition to the freemen's right to vote. His demand for a state of equal justice between all classes appeared in the Washington Chronicle.

February 9: On this date in 1906, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, the poet, died. He is known as a "poet of his people" and published his first volume: "Oak and Ivy" in 1893. His contribution was unique in the literature of his time and is remembered for his poems many of which were writ-

ten in "Negro dialect."

February 10: On this date in 1780, seven blacks from Dartmouth, Massachusetts petitioned against taxation without representation.

February 10: In 1961, Henry Lewis conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra during its regular season. It was a major achievement for a black conductor. In 1968 he was named musical director of the New Jersey Symphony.

February 11: Frances E.W. Harper died on this date in 1911. Her first volume of poetry, "Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects," was published in 1854. During the first five years, 10,000 copies were sold. Her best novel, Iola Leroy, the Shadows Uplifted, was published in 1860 and it was the first novel written and published by a black woman.

February 11: In 1961, Robert Weaver became the Administrator of Housing and Home Finance Agency of the federal government.

EXCELL is underway

by Tina Crinice and Kim Anderson

The Center for Lifelong Learning (EXCELL) is an organization sponsored by UNLV's department of extended education, which offers retired and semi-retired individuals university-level intellectual stimulation in a social context.

Various courses are offered each year with the main subject matter chosen by the members themselves, who pay a membership fee of \$25 per semester. Additional materials and books may cost extra and the semester fee entitles you to sign up for one or more courses.

The courses are led by different people including active and retired alumni, emeritus faculty and members of EXCELL.

Two main goals of the EXCELL program include peer learning and active participation. These two cornerstones help its members to become responsible for sharing past experience and knowledge with one another and by using volunteer faculty. The study group leaders will suggest and organize courses with members becoming a part of ensuring success within their study groups.

Shirley Harris, Chair of EXCELL, received a master's degree in sociology from UNLV in May 1990 and hopes that the new program will provide a forum for

members to pursue "intellectual, pedagogical and scholarly interests. Its commitment will focus on creating a sense of community among individuals whose common bond is a lifelong commitment to learning."

Carrol Steedman, Director of Credit and Special Interest Programs of Continuing Education,



Shirley Harris
Chair of EXCELL

said the group began organizing throughout the fall of 1990. It now has approximately 75 members.

The courses of study began on Feb. 4 and will continue through mid-May. Various topics to be studied include love and loneliness, China, contemporary art, and opera/musicals.

"The Creation of an Opera/Musical" will be presented by Mort

Shafer who has been conducting operas since 1976. He will attempt to explore all aspects of creating and producing a musical/ opera. "Depending on the group size, talents, and enthusiasm in the course, we may indeed succeed in a musical production," said Shafer.

Sig Stein, a retired pharmacist, will present a session on China. "We will open 3000 years of Chinese civilization", said Stein. He said the members will be encouraged to research aspects of China and share the learning experience with the group.

Gil Yarchever and Bette Ferguson will co-present a session on contemporary artists. Field trips to museums and galleries may be a possible addition to this session.

Shirley Harris, Chairman of the EXCELL program, will be presenting a session on "Loneliness and Love." Harris has a Master of Arts degree the Sociology of Aging.

"The program, which has the potential of generating a social side, promises to reward group members with a rich and dynamic learning environment to which all contribute and from which all gain a sense of accomplishment," Harris said.

If you have any questions or would like more information, contact Harris at 458-8460 or Carrol Steedman at 739-3394 in the department of continuing education.

Fitness isn't just for vanity anymore

by Deborah Soper

Nearly everything we do costs money: school, cars, clothes, food, rent, insurance, etc. But when we finish school, we acquire jobs to pay for our four years. We invest money in our cars with tune-ups and oil changes only to replace them in three years. Clothes change with fashions and fads. Food is replenishable. Rent is a waste of money. Insurance is an expense we need (but hate) to pay. Most things we do cost money and only benefit us in superficial ways.

The only thing worth spending a dime on is ourselves. We are given one body to do with what we choose. Why not choose exercise? Once our bodies break down, we cannot purchase another one. How many of us are healthy enough to exercise, and do not? And how many people cannot because of health restrictions, but would love to? Frank Butterfield, one of the top ten aerobic instructors in the

country and previous fitness events manager for NIKE, Inc, offered insight on physical fitness. Currently, Butterfield is executive director for the Las Vegas Athletic Clubs.

He began working out 12 years ago in college. One year, during winter break, he was so bored he began aerobics. He said he felt it kept him "from going off the deep end." "Exercise is my passion," Butterfield said.



Along with a good respiratory system, exercise also makes the brain grow stronger. Regular, vigorous exercise improves the brain's ability to respond more efficiently to one form of exercise. It also prepares the brain to better handle other types of physical activity.

Basically, exercise helps us think better, and makes us look and feel good. The more we do it, the harder it is to stop. All this makes it pretty hard not to jog down to the fitness center for a spin on the ol' Life Cycle while reading a good book.

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