

AFRICANS IN AMERICA

FOR THE LADIES

By Bonita Armstrong

It distresses me when I hear black brothers and sisters denying their heritage and their culture. As though being black and being of African decent is something to be ashamed of.

I've had conversations with several different people who have said "I am not an African. I am American." Their tone was telling me to not link them with Africa or the African culture whatsoever.

This attitude portrays a much bigger and deeper underlying problem for us as black people. It is a 400-year lesson in self-hate, which now has been im-



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bedded into our hearts and minds. It is now buried so deeply into our subconscious that we don't even realize what is hap-

pening to us.

It is self-hate that prompts a black person to say "I'm not African." Have you ever heard an American-born Chinese person say "I'm not Chinese," or an American-born Mexican say "I'm not Mexican," or even an American-born Italian say "I'm not Italian, I'm America." The fact is they are both.

The fact is we - black people - are both African and America. We have to remember Africans are a "race" of people, not just a continent. We belong to the African race. We are not separate from our African brothers just because we live in America. We are not separate from our African ancestors just because they lived hundreds of years ago and suffered through slavery while we did not.

We are African people who were born and raised in America. But, self-hate has been crammed down our throats so long, that we can hardly except the fact that our African culture and ancestry is something to be proud of.

When our forefathers were

brought to this country, the first thing the slavemasters did was take away their names and give them names while making mockery of the African name. They beat kings and queens into submission and forced them to be servants. They degraded our skin color and our hair type - calling us black, ugly, jungle bunnies, nappy headed and so forth.

Soon, after much oppression, this attitude was imbedded in us and passed on to our children. We started to believe the lies we were told of the worthlessness

of the African people and the greatness of the white race. In essence, we began to hate ourselves.

We have got to break this cycle of self-hatred. We are Africans born in America. Our skin is beautiful and ages gracefully. Our hair is thick, course and versatile, giving us countless options for style. Our bodies are strong and solid, making us good athletes and formidable opponents. Our hearts are loving and generous and we create strong family bonds.

We are spiritual people who

love God and nature and all the things that he created. We are scholars and the descendants of the scientists, architects, mathematicians, philosophers, kings, queens and teachers that taught the world, built pyramids, owned massive riches, and ruled nations.

We are a beautiful people - African people - with a rich and glorious past that we must connect to and incorporate into our everyday lives. We must love ourselves and our ancestry. If we don't love ourselves ... nobody else will.

FOCUS ON TRENDS

By Alison Deyette



(NAPS) - Joan Walters has sprung an incredible new collection of relaxed silhouettes with the introduction of a first-ever fabric construction. The "American Crinkle" collection is made with Fortrel Microspun in a new micro-crinkle fabric. This new textured fabric is a high-tech updated version of a combination of seersucker and gingham. The three key benefits of this appealing new fabrication are fluidity, washability and texture. The collection includes trousers, a boyfriend jacket, reversible vest, drawstring pants, shorts, long skirt, camp shirt and more offered in three combinations of red, navy or black with white. Also part of the collection is a replacement to the old-fashioned seersucker of the 50's. This classier version comes in solid white, red, navy or black with the seersucker stripe of the same solid color. The "American Crinkle" will have a special hangtag for each garment defining the superior qualities of this new textured Microspun formation including the exciting news that the pieces are machine washable. Joan Walters is sold in specialty and department stores like Nordstrom and Dillards.

BLACK ELEGANCE CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black Elegance, a lifestyle magazine for Black women with a national circulation of 300,000 is celebrating Black history with the February/March issue. New York-based Black Elegance is the source for fashion, beauty, celebrity, career, health and personal finance information along with general issues affecting Black women today. Here are highlights of the February/March issue of Black Elegance.

Black Elegance's Editor-in-Chief Sharyn Sheeter urges the magazine's readers to update their knowledge about their heritage. She suggests a few books on many aspects of Black history and culture. Among them are, The African American hero by Paul Carter Harrison, Malcolm X by Thulani Davis, Juba To Live by Clarence Major, Blacks In American Films and Television by Donald Bogle and The Measure Of Our Success: A Letter To My Children And Yours by Marian Wright Edelman.

In the cover story contributing writer Courtenay Edelhart interviewed Roc's wife Ella Joyce and her real life husband Dan Martin. This Hollywood supercouple talk about their love and life together.

In honor of Black history month, BE's west coast Editor-at-Large Cookie Lommel gave an excerpt of her recently published book examining the lives of three self-made Black American female millionaires - Madam C.J. Walker, Annie Tumbo Malone and Sarah Spencer Washington.

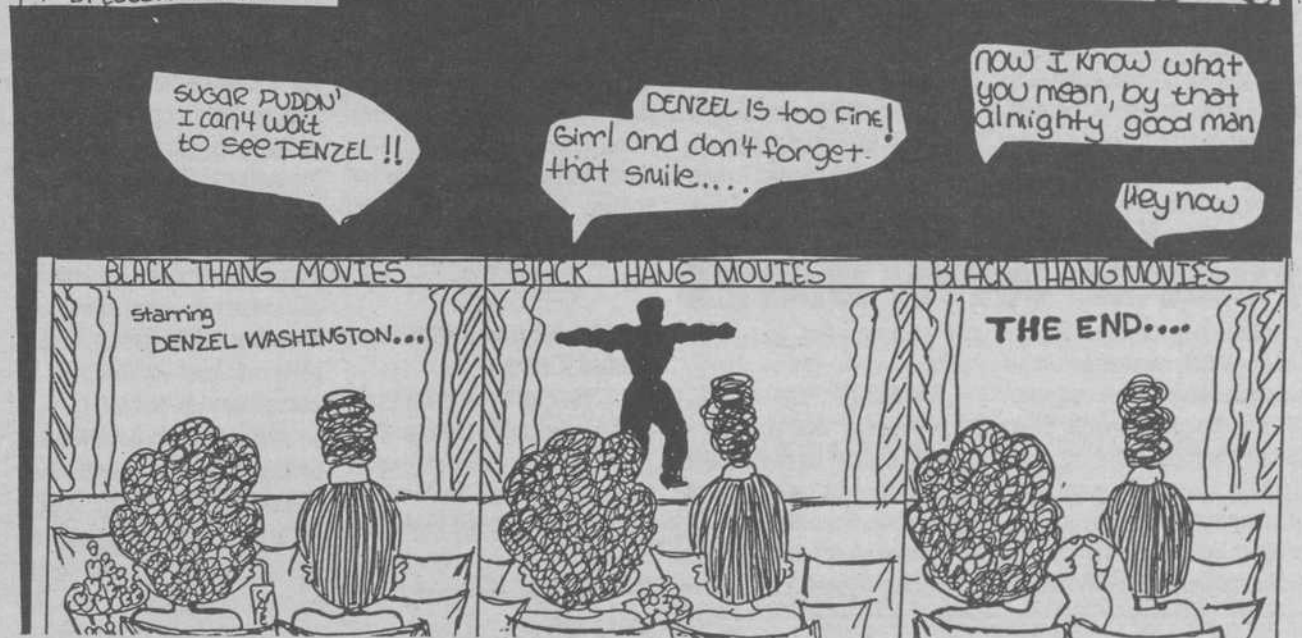
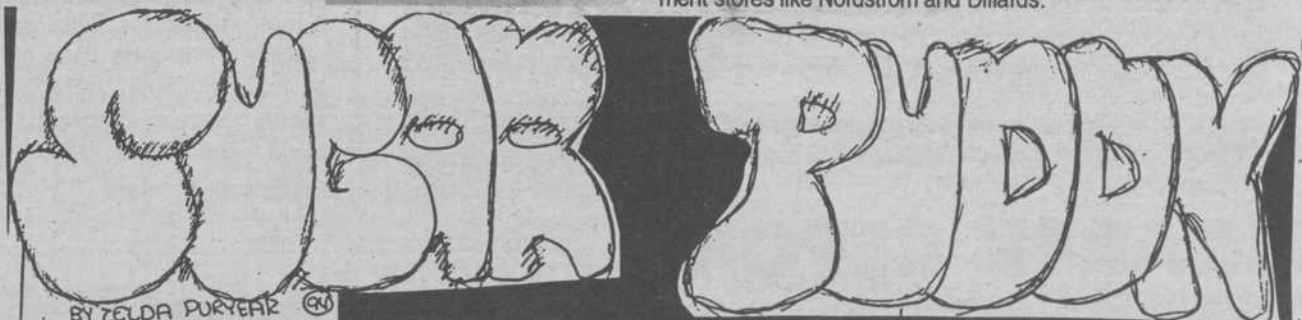
Contributing writer Rochelle Larkin suggests books to help children celebrate Black history Month. Among them are, John Brown, One Man Against Slavery by Gwen Everett, Jacob Lawrence's The Great Migration with a poetic narration by Walter Dean Myers, We Shall Overcome, heroes Of The Civil Rights movement by Fred Powledge and Brown Honey In Broomwheat Tea by Joyce Carol Thomas.

Special Projects Editor Ruth Houston educates BE readers on the Memphis Black history Tour. This tour includes a visit to Burkle Estate, which was a stop on the Underground Railroad for many runaway slaves. In fashion, Houston discusses the options for brides who want to express pride in their African-American heritage. Contributing writer Linda Evans gives manicure tips for brides who want to have beautiful hands on their special day.

In a feature story, Assistant Editor Janine Kelly interviewed Judith Jamison, the artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, This dancer's/choreographer's autobiography coincides with the Dance Theater's 35th anniversary celebration. In this interview, Jamison candidly discusses her feelings about her career, her students, her life and most of all, her dancing spirit.

BE's Beauty Editor Pat Collins urges readers to go back to their roots by revealing natural beauty secrets that African ancestors used that did not come from department stores.

General interest stories include Ruth Houston's article on how to find that special man and keep him, Sharyn Skeeter's story on the romantic island of Anguilla ad the Arts and Entertainment section provide stories on the music of Queen Latifah and Toni Braxton and a movie review on Philadelphia which features Tom Hanks, Denzel Washington and an interview with up coming actress Lisa Summerour.



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