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# SECOND SATURDAY NET

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Volume 1, Issue 1

December 1999

## Greetings!

This newsletter is for African Heritage families who are interested in getting to know one another and open to learning something about themselves in the process. The idea of providing a monthly or bi-monthly information exchange and resource guide grew out of an ongoing conversation with some of the folks who helped create the Second Saturday School. From Fall of 1993 to Spring of 1996, we held educational play sessions at Louden Nelson Community Center one morning a month, throughout the school year. Those lively and heart warming gatherings were designed for six to nine year olds, but family members of all ages seemed to enjoy participating. During the 1996-97 school year we held three bimonthly sessions and a science field trip to Natural Bridges and the Long Marine Lab. Since then, we've been working to devise a plan for reviving the program. Second Saturday began as an initiative of the African American Council of Santa Cruz and evolved into a three year experiment in promoting identity development and achievement among African American youth. This issue comes to you free of charge, but any contributions will help us to expand our readership and will be greatly appreciated--*Welcome to The Net!* ❖

### Second Saturday School October 1996



Louden Nelson Park Santa Cruz, California

Photo courtesy A. Williams

1996-97 Planning Group Members: Nubra Floyd, Adrienne Harrell, Madlyn Norman-Terrance, Allison Sampson Anthony and Edwin "Ashanti" Williams

## Letters From Zimbabwe

**Carolyn Martin-Shaw**

*Excerpted from monthly email report Carolyn plans to send friends and family while she and her husband Bill Shaw are living in Harare, Zimbabwe. She teaches Anthropology at UC Santa Cruz, he teaches Philosophy at San Jose State, and their daughter, Koren majored in Sociology at UC Berkeley...*

In September Bill and I celebrated our 7<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with dinner at an Indian restaurant. This is the year for copper, and Zambia (one of the neighboring countries) is in the Copper Belt, so we thought we'd find something good there, but no luck. During the month of September we visited the major tourist destinations in Zimbabwe—Great Zimbabwe, Victoria Falls, Hwange Game Park, Matopos Hills, and Bulawayo. In August we had great fun at the lesser places, and this report is on that trip.

### I LOVE MY SUNGLASSES

Five years ago in preparation for our trip to Egypt to visit Koren, I got new prescription sunglasses. The frames are big and gaudy—purple with gold flecks and pieces of gold at the temple. When it came time to choose the color for the lenses, I was presented with a choice of brown or grey. I oohed and aahed over the brown, which distorts what you see, so that it seems as though you are looking through rose-colored glasses. Being sensible I chose the more realistic grey, but the optician must have read my mind, because the glasses were prepared with the *brown* lenses, and I love them.

I wore my sunglasses on our trip to the Eastern Highlands and Hot Springs. Harare was looking especially drab as the winter dragged on, and spring refused to come, but the view through my glasses as we left the city was fine. When we reached the Eastern Highlands everything looked grand. We went to the Vumba mountains and stayed at the Eden Lodge. The lounge and the veranda of the lodge overlooks a valley and mountain range extending into Mozambique, the country to the east of land-locked Zimbabwe. The vegetation was lush, green and plentiful, but the weather was cool and foggy. The fog reminded me of San Francisco. Bill and I went for a walk in the forest exploring one of the valleys and then spent the evening in the lounge.

I decided to watch television, since we don't have one at home. At glance at the tv page in the newspaper shows that American soap operas like *The Young and the*

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# Letters From Zimbabwe

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*Restless* and *Sunset Beach* are popular as nighttime entertainment. In Vumba, television programs came in by way of satellite, and no local programs were available. Instead most of the broadcasting was from South Africa, including the Black Entertainment Network's all jazz programming and MTV. The *All Africa News* was reported by a stunning young Black woman, who had an accent that was hard to place and reminded me of Koren. I would call it mid-Atlantic—somewhere between British, American and South African. After enjoying a great fish dinners, Bill and I made a fire in the fireplace and had a comfortable evening. The next morning we were off to Hot Springs.

The town of Hot Springs is in the lowlands and is truly hot. In the winter time, when we were there, the temperature was in the 80s. Before travelling in that area, we had to take a malarial preventative. We found out about Hot Springs Spa and Resort from a friend of our Zimbabwean friend Leslie Ruda, who called it one of the country's best kept secrets. Bill and I went on a walk while we were there. A quarter of a mile of so from the spa is the Odzi River, which runs through the communal areas. Communal areas are parts of the countryside where land is primarily owned by family clans and allocated as needed. It is contrasted with large and small scale farms in commercial farming areas. Our path led to a bridge and then we lost the trail. After we gave up looking for a path, we enjoyed the walk along the river bank where the clear blue water splashed up against trees and the remains of vegetable gardens. We never quite found the spot that had been described to us but walked until we got to a second bridge, at which point we decided to cross over and walk back along the other side of the river.

That side of the river seemed to be more populated. There were more goats (not that I was very happy walking among them). Also more cows and more people. We saw women washing their clothes in the river, and women and girls bathing themselves in the river. Further upstream, the

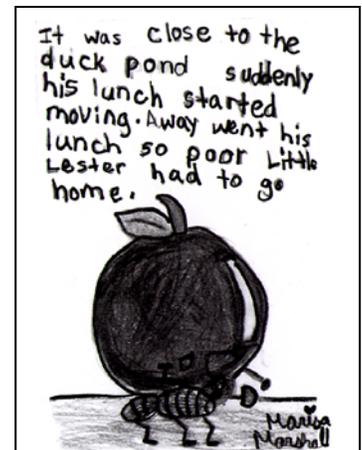
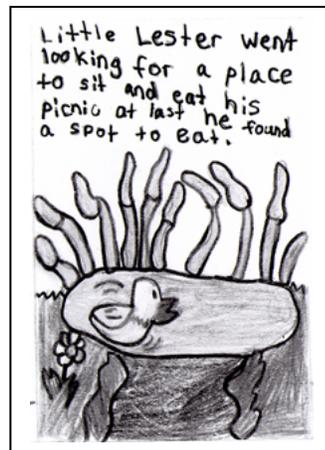
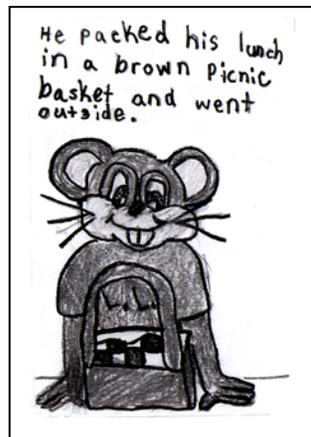
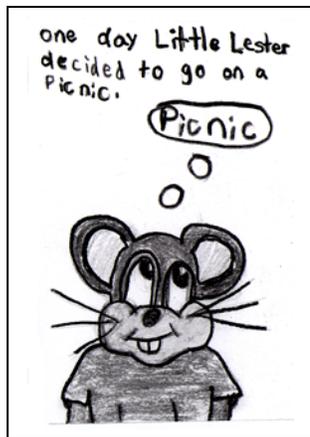
men and boys were bathing. I used the few words of Shona that I know to tell the women that we were coming and to give them time to clothe themselves before Bill appeared. By the time we encountered the women at the river, we had discovered that we would have to retrace our steps to get back to the Spa. After crossing the river at the second bridge, we discovered that the first bridge did not go all the way across the river. We learned later that it had been destroyed during the liberation struggle. We saw other people wading across the river but, since the Odzi and all rivers in Zimbabwe are infested with bilharzia, we decided not to. (Bilharzia infection can lead to--among other things--a condition called river blindness.) What started out to be an hour and a half walk in the early morning had turned into a four hour walk that was just ending at midday. We were hatless and had not thought to bring water with us. Fortunately, we arrived at lunch time and were planning to have treatments in the afternoon, so we got to spend the rest of the day lounging around and telling everyone the tale of our adventures.

## THE WALKING MAN

Since the entire Spa was built around pleasure, there was no sign of work being done anywhere on the premises except for the waiters and one young waitress who served drinks by the pools. I particularly noticed a waiter who walked at a quicker pace than the others and seemed to be in constant motion. He reminded me of my cousin Wilbur. At seventy, Wilbur walked everyday and always at a fast pace. He walked for miles no matter what the weather was like. He would go to the drugstore (maybe a mile roundtrip) to get his chewing tobacco and then be out on the road again, later in the day. When I was just a little girl, he started buying me pickles, and, more recently when I have visited Virginia as a grandmother, he would still walk miles to the store to get me a pickle. He died this year and all of us, but especially my Uncle Richard, will miss him. He was Uncle Richard's best friend. He would talk, and Uncle Richard would listen. He even got Uncle Richard to argue with him sometimes. Wilbur could talk on any subject and usually could bring a smile to your face. Here's to the memory of that walking man! ❖

## Little Lester

by Marisa Marshall



## Interview with Ashanti Williams

This Fall, a group of parents of African American students joined forces with Santa Cruz High staff and interested community members to create a series of four daylong workshops on cultural identity and school achievement. The idea for the series came from community-based educator Nubra Elaine Floyd, who also served as facilitator. For the November session on *Social class and professional aspirations*, Edwin Ashanti Williams was invited to lead a Tangram activity for group development, and the following exchange was an introduction to that part of the workshop.

**Nubra:** *Where does the word Tangram come from?*

**Ashanti:** *As the story goes, an ancient Chinese lord once dropped a tile that broke into seven pieces, when it hit the floor. At first he tried to fit them back together, and then he became fascinated by the apparently endless number of patterns that could be made from the geometric shapes that had resulted. His name was Tan, and the puzzle he created became an international favorite called the Tangram, it has intrigued game enthusiasts for centuries.*

**Nubra:** *Why do you use the Tangram in your work?*

**Ashanti:** *I've been an adventure educator and management consultant for fifteen years, and much of my work involves an emphasis on teambuilding. So I got the idea of creating an oversized version of the Tangram that could also be used to demonstrate the working dynamics of groups.*

**Nubra:** *Who are some of your clients?*

**Ashanti:** *So far we've been selling mostly to educational programs like Education Training Research Associates of Scotts Valley, to non-profit organizations, and to some business corporations. It can be an excellent way to enhance communication and interpersonal skills.*

**Nubra:** *What do these oversized Tangrams cost?*

**Ashanti:** *You can buy your very own 3' x 3' brightly colored plexiglass Tangram complete with developmental lesson plan and technical assistance for \$150. For additional information contact Ashanti West Consulting at 146 Bean Creek Road, Suite B1 in Scotts Valley. The phone number is (831) 461 1501 or you can send e-mail to [ewill7740@aol.com](mailto:ewill7740@aol.com) ❖*

### Teambuilding And New Group Rating Activity Module?



Identity and Achievement Workshop  
Louden Nelson Center, Santa Cruz, California -Nov 1999

## Africa Summit News

The National Summit on Africa will be held in Washington, D.C. February 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>. The Central Region California Delegates meeting and open forum was held last month at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. The session was convened by Professor John Oriji, who is regional co-chair and a member of the history department at Cal Poly. The session included presentation of a paper on African issues by Cal Poly Engineering Professor Samuel O. Agbo. The following material is excerpted from that paper. For more information on the various Africa Summit issues, please visit our website at [www.africasummit.org](http://www.africasummit.org)

## Land Tenure and Agriculture

by Samuel Agbo

An issue of land tenure was raised in the thematic paper on *Sustainable Development, Quality of Life, and the Environment*. The issue as raised referred to woman not having equal rights in regard to land ownership in many African countries as a problem to be addressed, especially in the interest of agricultural production. I shall examine this issue from the Nigerian perspective, which I believe is similar to that of many West African countries. The situation may be quite different elsewhere.

It is helpful to divide the land in Nigeria into two categories: the land in the rural areas in which the villages are situated, and the land in the cities and elsewhere. The land in the villages are all privately held. Even those jointly owned by small clans or extended families are regarded as privately held and are being continually divided up as inheritance to young adults. Such jointly owned land is ever dwindling in size, and a large percentage of such extended families no longer have any jointly held land left. In these communities, only men inherit land, but such is not considered inequitable. Among other things, this land tenure system determines a person's root for men and women alike. To disrupt it would be to demolish the custom of the people a virtually impossible task that would not result in any benefits.

The land in the cities and outside the villages are in government hands. It is in this category that large unused tracts of land exist. Land in this category is sold or otherwise

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Photos by Mic Podorson



Maureen Littlejohn, Rhonda Rhodes, Nubra Floyd, Rip Harris, Gail Levine debrief with Ashanti Williams.

## Land Tenure and Agriculture

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allocated as a matter of government action. Men and women alike may buy or otherwise acquire such land. The rules governing government allocation or sale of land is hardly clear to anyone.

Finally, it is necessary to point out that in Nigeria, men are more heavily involved in agricultural production than women. This may also be the case in many West African Countries. ❖

*For more information about the author please visit the Cal Poly website at [www.calpoly.edu](http://www.calpoly.edu). To request the full text of this article you can send e-mail to Sam Agbo at [sagbo@calpoly.edu](mailto:sagbo@calpoly.edu).*

## Q & A?

If you have comments or questions about anything in this issue of *Second Saturday Net*--or would like to make some contribution of funding--or submit art or copy please mail to:

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*This issue written and edited by Nubra Floyd and Tina Virrey  
December 20<sup>th</sup> 1999*

**Statewide Africa Summit Meeting**  
Oakland, California  
January 29<sup>th</sup> in the year 2000

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