

Profs spread American culture to Africa

By KAREN KANGAS
Of the Emerald

In a crowded sub-Saharan community, a man walks through the marketplace wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with "Joe's Bar and Grill." Odds are, the wearer doesn't know what the shirt says or means.

University professors Molly Westling and George Wickes use this example to illustrate the strong influence America has on the goods bought and sold in many African countries. Westling and Wickes are very interested in the Western power that asserts this influence.

For this reason the two academicians are traveling to West Africa this March on an American Culture lecturing tour, sponsored by the United States International Communications Agency, previously known as the United States Information Service.

"USICA is the cultural arm of the State Department, which provides information about the United States in all major capitals of the world," Westling explains. "It is the cultural service of the U.S. Embassy."

Last year Wickes and Westling, a husband and wife team, lectured in North Africa and were called back this year by USICA to lecture in West Africa. The couple will visit Morocco, Togo, Chad, and the Ivory Coast, presenting their lectures to university audiences.

Their topics include "The American

South," "The Role of Women in the United States," and "Images of America: Some Reflections on the Mass Media," by Westling. Wickes will give "Literature as it Reflects Politics of the '50s, '60s, and '70s."

Both professors say that almost any American who has lived in the United States for the past 30 years and who has given some thought to what has happened in those years would qualify to lecture to the Africans about American culture.

Wickes adds that he particularly qualifies to lecture on American literature because he "teaches this stuff." Wickes is an English professor and Westling is an Honors College professor who grew up in the south and has taught courses about the mass media.

Wickes and Westling point out that their lectures are not pro-Western propaganda. "We tend to be critical. We tell the truth about political problems, Kent State, and discrimination," Wickes says.

"Painting a rosy picture doesn't do these people any good. It's been 20 years since the liberation (from French colonial rule) and these countries have been wooed by everyone. They're trying to decide which way to go; toward socialism, capitalism, and so on" he says.

Westling and Wickes point out that the America that Africans see through the media is simply a series of images that don't



Photo by Keith Allen

University professors Molly Westling and George Wickes

give people any understanding of the country.

"Our presentation is more thoughtful, critical and detailed than the media presentations," Wickes says.

Westling says the people are all very responsive and want to learn about the United

States. She recalls last year lecturing to a group of black Muslims, most of whom were men, about the ERA. The men asked a number of questions and disagreed with a lot of what she said, but remained polite the whole time.

"Afterward a tall, black man offered to wipe the blackboards for me," she says laughing.

Westling says she felt uncomfortable in parts of North Africa, however, because of the "incredibly repressive atmosphere." Most of the women are still veiled in that part of the country, she says, and unmarried women who have any kind of contact with men, even through education in another country, are considered "fallen" women. She says the atmosphere in West Africa is much less repressive.

The two professors learn about their audiences through contact with them during and after the lectures.

"The students are more willing to talk and learn than some of the older people might be," Westling explains. She says she and her husband spend three or four days at each university and tend to see some of the same people each day.

Communication is not much of a problem because most of the students speak French and English and Wickes is fluent in French.

Westling and Wickes will leave for their destination near the equator at the end of dead week or fall term.

"It's very hot over there," Wickes says. But as he and his wife look out at Eugene's icy roads, they agree that it will be nice to be someplace warm.

ask the sexpert

This is a weekly column by Planned Parenthood of Lane County. Send questions to the Emerald, 300 EMU, or call Planned Parenthood at 344-1611.

Do most birth control pills cause abnormal depression in women due to the hormone change the pills create?

Yes, you could be experiencing depression associated with birth control pills; some women have that reaction. Others notice that pre-menstrual tension, anxiety or depression is reduced when they are taking the pill.

On rare occasions pills are associated with a decreased sex drive, although more often it's the reverse because fear of pregnancy is reduced.

Sometimes depression is due to high estrogen levels, which cause fluid retention. Estrogen and progesterin are the two hormones found in birth control pills. Some-

times the estrogen is too low, or the progesterin is too high. Changing to a different type of birth control pill will often reduce the depression. You could ask your doctor about that.

I was wondering if abortions are really as safe as people say they are?

First of all, abortions are an expensive method of birth control, both in terms of your pocketbook and your mental health. It is much more desirable to think ahead about birth control.

As far as safety is concerned, abortions performed in the first three months of pregnancy are safer — in terms of risk of death due to complications — than having your tonsils removed or even going through pregnancy and childbirth.

As for other complications, most women experience some discomfort and menstrual-like cramping after an abortion. Normally, they are not severe and disap-

pear in several hours.

In 15 to 20 of every 1,000 abortions, an infection of the uterus and fallopian tubes develops soon after the operation. The symptoms of such an infection are fever, nausea and lower abdominal pain. This should be reported to a doctor immediately. Infections of this sort are usually easily cured by antibiotics.

In one to two out of every 1,000 abortions, the wall of the uterus is perforated by a surgical instrument. In about half of these cases an abdominal operation is necessary to repair the damage.

Another complication is an incomplete abortion, which occurs in 1 to three out of every 1,000 abortions. It may cause continuous bleeding or cramping, and the suction operation is repeated. Heavy bleeding occurs in approximately two to ten women out of 1,000. In some cases blood transfusions are necessary.

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Eugene may be another Venice if plan succeeds

A plan to link the Willamette River with Fern Ridge Reservoir via a 12-mile-long waterway running through the heart of Eugene may have edged a little closer to realization Wednesday night when the Emerald Canal Committee Board of Directors made its first public report.

Charles Porter, a Eugene lawyer and former Congressman, chaired the meeting and heard reports from committee members on the estimated costs of the canal, potential sources of funding, major hurdles in planning the project, legal issues and methods of gaining public support.

The Emerald Canal constitutes the skeleton of a project designed to develop the Amazon Slough into a multi-purpose urban waterway.

A July, 1978 feasibility study done by the University's Department of Urban and Regional Planning (URP) refers to an "extensive water network linking the Willamette River, the Millrace, downtown Eugene, the Amazon Slough and ending eight miles

west of the city at Fern Ridge Reservoir." The study calls the proposed waterway the Amazon Corridor.

Emerald Canal Committee members agreed that the group must organize, probably as a non-profit corporation, to raise funds and otherwise function legally.

The group also discussed the need to gain the support of the Lane County Board of Commissioners and Eugene City Council.

The URP study estimates the total cost of developing the canal to be between \$12 million and \$19 million. Porter said most or all of the waterway could be financed through voter approval of a county-wide general obligation bond issue.

The committee's Board of Directors, which includes Jack Craig, member of Eugene Water and Electric Board, and Jerry Diethelm, head of the University's Department of Landscape Architecture, will meet January 31 to decide on specific courses of action.