

Bantu Rainbow Nation, vying for social change

By Paul Ertelt
Of the Emerald

Tying political change to cultural awareness is one of the goals of Bantu Rainbow Nation, a Eugene-based group dedicated to social causes such as ending apartheid in South Africa.

Meeting and sharing of cultures will produce the awareness that is prerequisite for social change, says Tekeba Bantu Davis, a youth organizer for BRN.

"No culture or group that has ever survived... could survive without family, tradition and culture. It's the basis of life," Davis says.

"It is the development of the person that leads to political change," adds BRN member Richard Zafft. "You can't have social change without individual change."

Bantu, an African word meaning banning together, reflects the group's philosophy of "humankind banning together for the betterment of humanity," Davis says. Bantu was the hybrid language of southern Africa before the slave trade and enabled many diverse tribes and cultures to come together to trade, Davis says.

Personal contact and cooperation are more important to the group's cohesion than traditional organizational structure, Davis says. BRN is a grassroots organization that often works with other groups on issues such as amnesty for Salvadoran refugees and rights of American Indians and women, he says.

BRN is affiliated with and draws much of its inspiration from the Descendants of Angola Africa Society, a black nationalist group that has operated in Africa for more than a quarter of a century. Davis was associated with DAAS as a child in South Africa.

Davis says BRN got off the ground last fall. The University and lack of racism in Eugene make this area a good environment for BRN's efforts, he says.

Davis says that the fight against apartheid will be a long struggle. Once it is accomplished, Africans still will be faced with many problems, he says, and he hopes BRN will be able to channel funds and technical skills to help the African people.

The group's efforts to raise consciousness



Photo by Karen Stallwood
Tekeba Bantu Davis displays one of the T-shirts Bantu Rainbow Nation members produced and sold to raise money for Ethiopian relief.

and promote cultural awareness include an upcoming event featuring reggae music, an environmental poet and a slide show by a University history professor. Past projects include producing and selling T-shirts to raise money for Ethiopian relief.

The reggae band Strictly Roots will headline the event scheduled for Saturday in the EMU Ballroom. The band is not just another group that happens to play Jamaican music but lives together as a family dedicated to the Rastafari religion, Zafft says.

The benefit event will also include music by local ska band Stick Against Stone, a slide show on South Africa by history Professor David Anthony, and poetry by "Wolfcreek" Jim.

Doors open at 7 p.m. and tickets are \$4. The event is co-sponsored by ASUO and the EMU Cultural Forum.

Correction

A story in Tuesday's Oregon Daily Emerald inaccurately reported part of a Caswell Dormitory conflict with police. The article should have reported that a substitute resident assistant for Caswell called Campus Security when a party at the dorm began to get out of hand.

We apologize for any inconvenience this error may have caused.

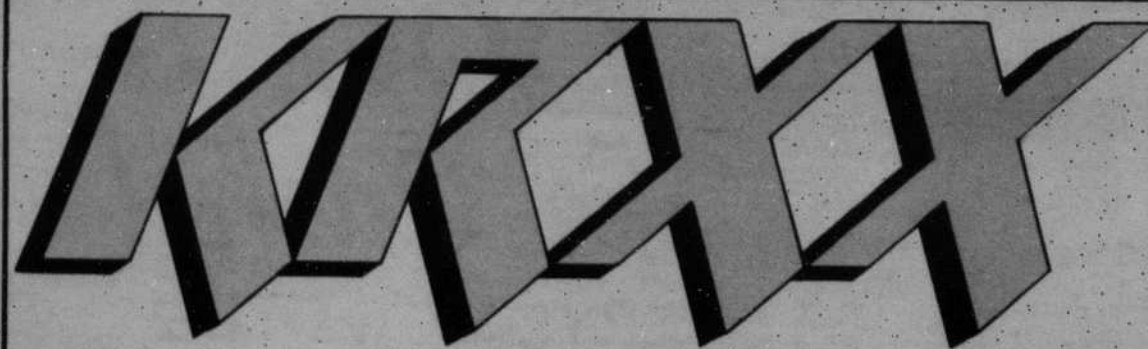
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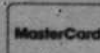
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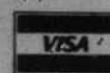
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