

KWANZA— OUR BLACK HOLIDAYS

BY Joyce Braden Harris

Kwanza is a holiday based on the traditional harvest ceremonies of West Africa. Kwanza is a Swahili word meaning "first fruits". Traditionally African people worked hard throughout the year caring for their crops and when it was time to harvest the crops a big celebration was held. Everyone contributed something they had grown during the festivities. African people joined together to share the fruits of collective work and enjoy the common bond, harmony and peace so deeply rooted in the spirit of the community.

During the late 1960's Ron Karenga recognized the need for Black people to have a holiday that reflected the richness of our African heritage and one that would give guidance and inspiration for the future. Kwanza served the need for a holiday based on African traditions. Since most of us don't plant and harvest crops we cannot celebrate the harvest of the first fruits. Our "first fruits" are the accomplishments we have made and the concrete works we have built throughout the year in our struggle for freedom and equal rights. Our "first fruits" are the changes that are beginning to take place in our minds, our lives and in our community.

The KWANZA celebration lasts for seven days, beginning on Dec. 26 and ending Jan. 1. Each day of Kwanza presents one of "The Seven Principles of Blackness" (Umoja Saba), a system of values for Black people developed by Ron Karenga. Each day is dedicated to reflecting upon the principle and how we can incorporate it into our daily lives. The seven days of Kwanza and the values they represent are: Dec. 26—Umoja—Unity; Dec. 27—Kujichagulia—Self-Determination; Dec. 28—Ujima—Collective Work and Responsibility; Dec. 29—Ujamaa—Cooperative Economics; Dec. 30—Nia—Purpose; Dec. 31—Kuumba—Creativity; Jan. 1—Imani—Faith in Blackness.

Black people in Portland have celebrated Kwanza for the last seven years; again it is time for us to come together and celebrate our survival. Kwanza is a time for Black people to acknowledge the progress we have made in our struggle for freedom and equal rights and to set even higher goals for the future. Kwanza is a real example of the traditional unity which has existed among Black people throughout history. Kwanza expresses the true nature of Black people sharing and working together for the positive development of the Black community.

The Black Educational Center invites the Black community to join us in celebrating Kwanza this year. All activities will take place at the Black Educational Center, 1640 NE Alberta St.

1979 KWANZA FESTIVAL OF EVENTS

Dec. 26 Umoja—Unity Students from the Black Educational Center will present a special Kwanza program of songs, dances and a skit. *Begins at 7:30 pm.*

Dec. 27: Kujicha—A special ceremony to provide a child with an adult outside of the immediate family who can give the child spiritual guidance in the ways of the world. *Begins at 7:30 pm.*

Dec. 28: Ujima—Ronnie Herndon's Acting Troupe will present a Ronnie Herndon original play... a humorous look at a serious topic—Black people working together for the good of all. *Begins at 7:30 pm.*

Dec. 29: Ujamaa—A Kwanza bazaar featuring GUMBO—an African dish... all you can eat \$2.50... Bake Sale... Crafts. *Begins at 6:00 pm.*

Dec. 30: Nia—A CHILDREN'S KWANZA PROGRAM. A special appearance by Anthony the magician. Storytelling, crafts, fun! *2:00 pm.*

Dec. 31: Kuumba—"Creative Fashions for the Black Family." Creativity A fashion show of custom designed fashions for all members of the family. Music, poetry. *Begins at 7:30 pm.*

Jan. 1: Imani— Bring a dish and share in the festivities. Good Faith in Blackness music. Good vibrations. *Begins at 1:00 pm.*

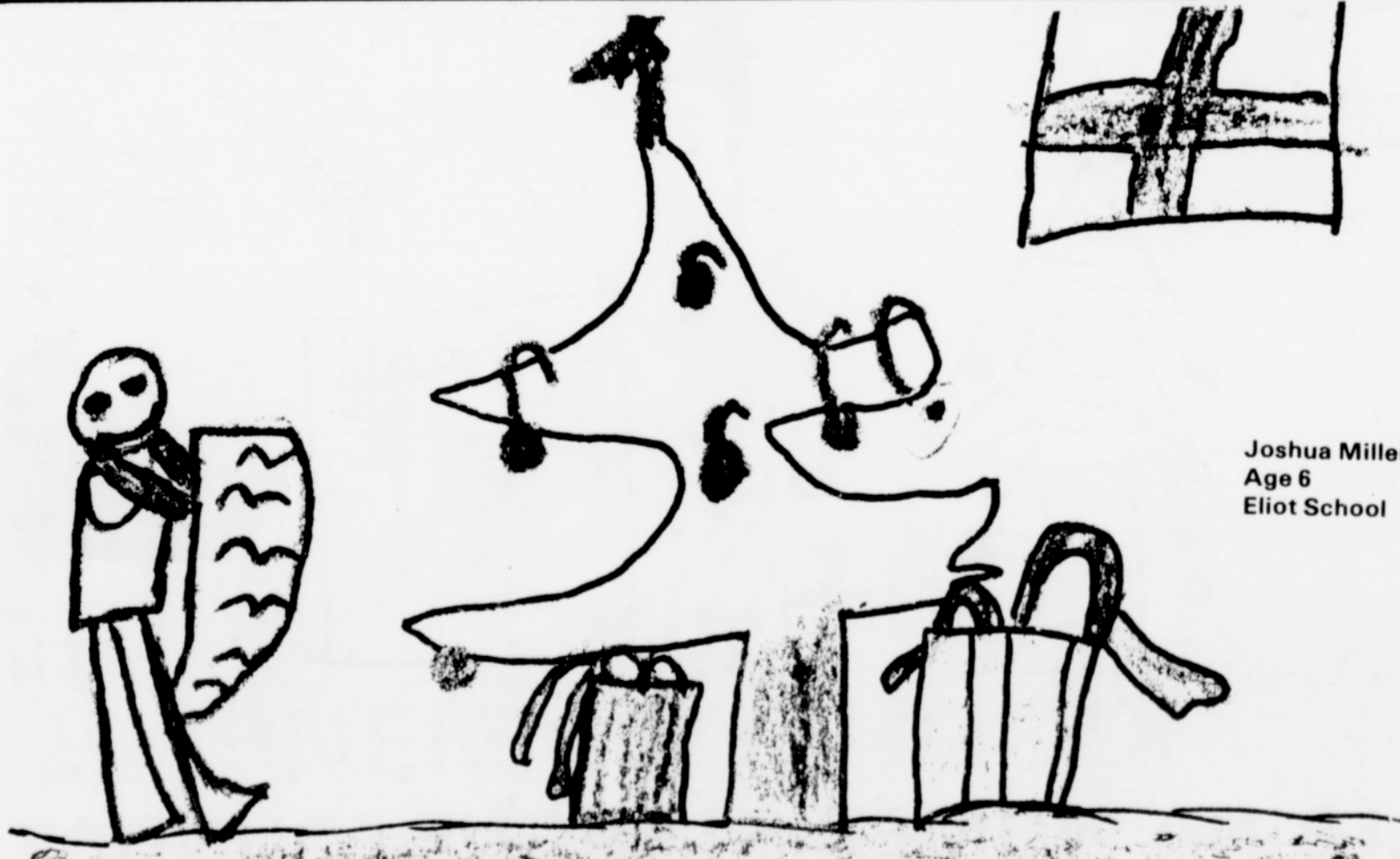
For further information call the Talking Drum Bookstore, 282-9465 between 2:30 and 6:00 pm.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

FROM THE PEOPLE

OF

G.A.F.



Joshua Miller
Age 6
Eliot School

G.I. JOE'S INC.

8900 n. vancouver ave.

283-1171